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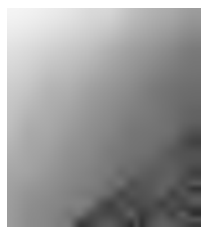


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RELIGIOUS RHEUMATISM



J. B. BAKER





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RELIGIOUS RHEUMATISM

BY
J. B. BAKER

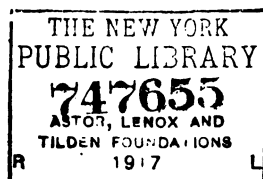


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TO THE MEMORY OF
THE DEAR OLD-FASHIONED
CHRISTIAN MOTHER

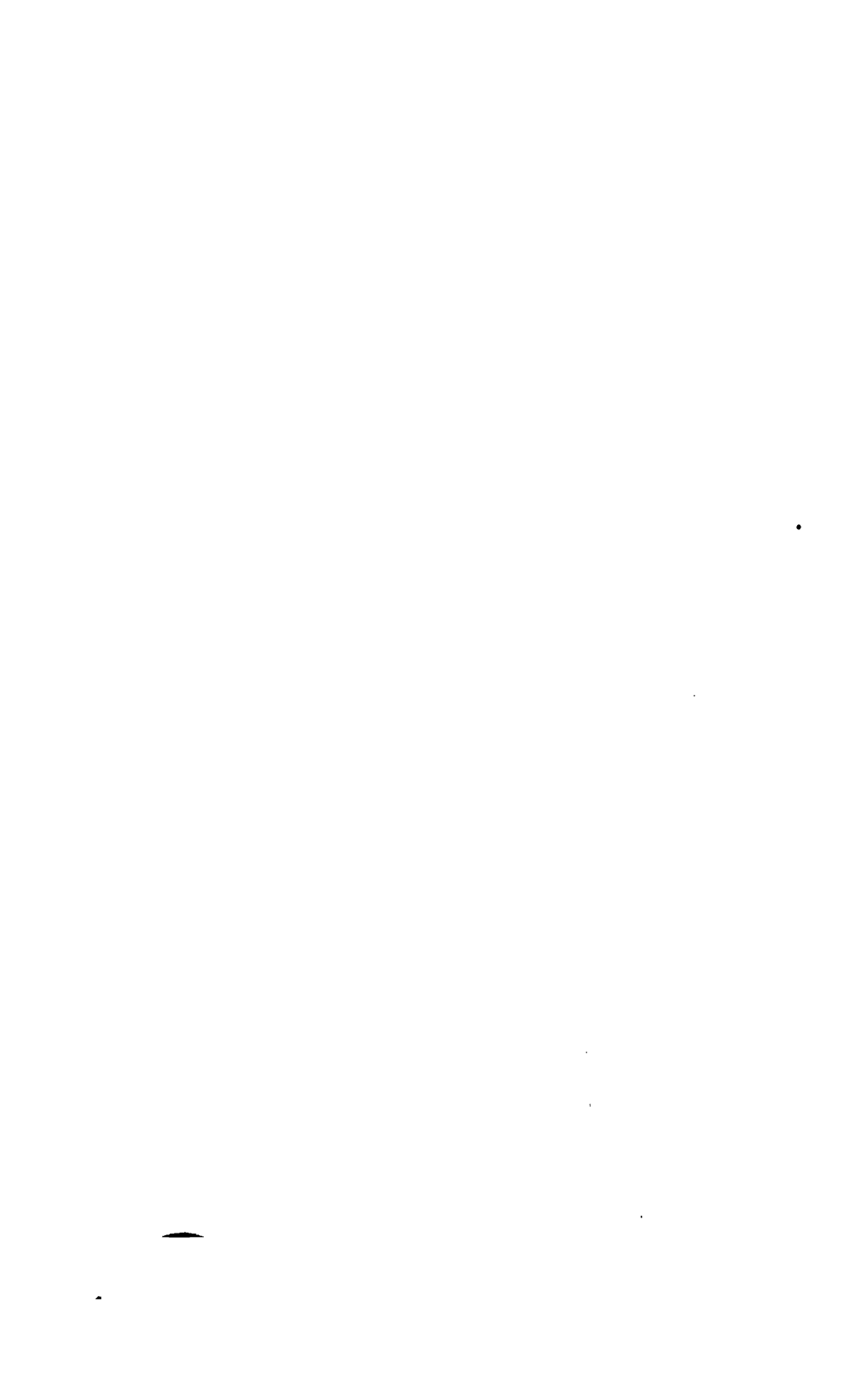
WHO STARTED THE AUTHOR ON
THE WAY TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY
AND THEN WENT HOME TO GUIDE
HIM FROM ONE OF THE WINDOWS
OF THE FATHER'S HOUSE THIS
VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

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RELIGIOUS RHEUMATISM

Of all the afflictions to which the human body is heir there is none that is capable of inflicting such exquisite torture upon its victims as rheumatism.

In the days of the persecutions an iron statue of the Virgin Mary was made so that the arms would enfold the victim and pierce him with many wounds. Thrust into the arms of the iron Virgin, the poor heretic was soon jabbed by knives that issued from the inner sides of the arms and by a pointed tongue that issued from the mouth. It was intended to illustrate the contempt of the Virgin Mary for those who turned their back upon the pope.

But that suffering was nothing compared with the pain that the hot-footed devils of torture thrust into the joints and ligaments and muscles of a rheumatic patient. The agonies of the victim of the ancient statue were all of the same kind; the agonies of the rheumatic are almost as varied as the attacks are numerous.

Now he feels a twitch as though demons from the pit had turned linemen and were drawing up his nerves and clipping off the ends; now he feels as though a buzz-saw were cutting his thigh-bones

into half inch blocks ; now he feels as though a bolt of lightning had struck him in the shoulder and discharged its full force into his system ; now he feels as we used to feel when the Indians were after us in our dreams, a slow, steady locking of all the joints and muscles until absolute helplessness occurs. Certain it is that if the man who introduced the awful affliction into the world were still living and could be caught he would be lynched on the spot.

Where it came from or how it first appeared is not quite certain. The ancients have one way of accounting for it in their story of Prometheus and Epimetheus, his brother. According to this story these two brothers were commissioned by the gods to endow the creatures of the earth with their various gifts. To the lion they gave strength, to the fish scales, to the bird wings, to the hound fleetness of foot. Having endowed the lower creatures, they found when they came to man that they had given everything of value away. Debating what to do, Prometheus said, " I'll go to the sun with a torch and catch fire and bring it down to man, and with that fire man will be able to make for himself weapons and become master of all the creatures." As it was said, so it was done. No sooner was it done, however, than the gods in their wrath decided to punish the two presumptuous brothers for stealing what they had reserved for themselves. Prometheus they punished by chaining him to the Caucasus, where the vultures came

and pecked away his vitals. Epimetheus they punished by sending to him Pandora, the many-gifted woman. It so happened that one day, as Epimetheus went on a hunting trip, he told his gift from heaven that he had stored away in a closet a jar of curses that were left after endowing the various creatures with their gifts and that it was never under any circumstances to be opened. That was enough. After he was gone, dapper little Pandora went to the closet to take a peep. The peep taken, out flew envy, hate, jealousy and scorn for the soul, and chills, fevers, leprosy, epilepsy and rheumatism for the body.

This story you will no doubt reject as an authentic account of the introduction of the terrible affliction, but there is one element about it that we are quite sure you will accept, and that is that it was not in the original plan* of things. God didn't ordain man to suffer. He made him to live without suffering. It is here, however, and like all facts that obtrude themselves upon us must be dealt with.

In looking over the few medical books available to me and in recalling the cases I have known, I find that the disease is roughly divided into two classes, the acute and the chronic, both painful and severe. While there is some difference of opinion as to the origin of the disease, some holding that it is a bacterial disease, others that it results from the improper elimination of the waste products of the body, there is little difference of

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opinion concerning the predisposing cause. It almost invariably follows an exposure of some kind. The acute form attacks mostly the young, the chronic mostly the old.

The cure of the acute form consists of the administration of salicylic acid or another derivative of salicin for the reduction of the fever, and in wrapping the limbs in cotton and the blanketing of the body in woollens. The most painful parts are sometimes bathed in water. This disease sometimes goes into the pericardium and sometimes into the endocardium, and so completely lays out the victim that for months at a time he becomes absolutely helpless. These cases, though severe, are usually cured.

The chronic form is not so easily mastered, however. The physicians who treat them, if their patients stay with them until the end, will, like the Irish doctor, have to send the widow a bill for curing her husband until he died. Oh, how they rub themselves with liniments and salves, how they drink root bitters and berry juices and leaf liquors! I don't wish to discourage you, brother, neither do I wish to take any legitimate practice from any physician, for they are kind to me and sometimes give me as many as five funerals a week, but if you are one of those chronic rheumatics you might as well take the money you are spending for nostrums and buy an air-ship and have a few days of sport before you die. Even if it should

fall down it would do no more than your teasing cures are doing.

Religious rheumatism, in its causes, manifestations and cures, is not unlike the rheumatism of the body. In fact, it affects the same organs that are affected by the physical malady.

The only difference is the starting point. In physical rheumatism the disease travels from without in, while in religious rheumatism it travels from within out. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

The religious rheumatism of the heart affects it very much as the physical rheumatism does. It impedes its normal work. The normal work of the heart is the sending out of blood throughout the system in order to keep it healthy. It is the pumping station of the body. When disease inflames it and stiffens its valves, of course the body will not get its supply of oxygenized blood and a general tie-up will occur all along the line.

The same is true of the heart and its religious functions. While we are not accustomed to think of our spiritual nature as a thing of hands and feet and jaw-bones and teeth, yet it is true that personality grasps and travels and talks and eats. The psalmist said, "The ordinances of God are sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." Surely they were not sweet to his physical mouth. We eat with our souls as truly as with our bodies.

The congregation that hears a good sermon bites it spiritually, the mice that chew the paper bite it physically. You can't think of personality without clothing it with a spiritual body. It is the duty of the heart to keep that spiritual body healthy. It must keep the eyes of faith clear, the blood of devotion pure, the nerves of sympathy keen, the muscles of courage strong. When the heart fails to send a full supply of God's oxygen out into all the members of our personality, religious rheumatism has set in and begun to prepare us for spiritual death.

Religious rheumatism sometimes affects the muscles of the mouth and makes it impossible even for Christian Endeavorers to testify for their Lord. Christ said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." It is the business of witnesses to talk, but they will not talk. They are as tightly frozen over at the mouth as arctic rivers are. This form of religion is pathetic, for it robs the person of one of the richest satisfactions that comes to the Christian. There is no greater joy than to testify for the Master. It also deprives the community of a benefit to which it has a right. The mouths that are stopped by religious rheumatism are like the oil wells capped by the Standard Oil Company. They have an almost immeasurable supply of oil flowing through their pipes but they have an unmeasured supply capped over.

Of course a capped well does a community no good; it is only a possibility. So is it with the Christian who yields no oil of speech.

O ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ, speak for him. What if you have no education and cannot do it with the polish of cultured speech? When Billy Bray was asked whether he could read writing, he replied, " Bless your soul, I can't even read readin'."

Yet he shook Wales with a revival that surpassed the sweep of the mountain storm. The storm shakes only the surface; Billy Bray's revival went down like the earthquake to the caverns beneath. Down in the dark shadows of the Welsh mines miners fell on their knees and asked God what they must do to be saved.

What if your past is such as to give you a poor credential to the hearing of men? Bunyan was so vile that mothers forbade their children go near the foul-mouthed tinker, and they fled from Saul of Tarsus as children flee from an escaped lion. Yet both immediately upon their conversion went and preached Christ and Him crucified. When you begin to speak, feeling that it is "not I but Christ that dwelleth in me," men will forget your past for they will see "no man save Jesus only."

Sometimes religious rheumatism is most prominent during singing. Frankly, I tremble for the Christian who does not sing. I can't get away from Shakespeare's reflection,

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“The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.”

It is true that something worse than treason might be perpetrated upon the ears of the musical if some of us would ever succeed in gaining the supremacy in congregational singing, but the Lord usually sprinkles every congregation with a sufficient number of good singers to prevent the mutilation of a hymn beyond identification. At any rate, songs should not be addressed to the musical but to God, and God likes the prattling and the cooing of his children as well as earthly parents do. It is great to listen to a clear, sweet-toned soprano as she wings her circling way toward the throne, glorious to hear a great oratorio thunder forth the volume of the storm; but when the totals are announced on the great day ahead I have no doubt the simple “Rock of Ages” and “Angels Hovering 'Round” and “Happy Day,” sung by voices good, bad and indifferent, but from consecrated hearts, will be found to have turned more to righteousness than all the rest together. Oh, let us sing unto the Lord, dear friends. There is nothing more compellingly sweet than the music of a sincere heart.

When the mob was tearing down Nelson's house, Wesley and his companions came singing down the street and the mob dispersed. The Tenth Regulars, colored, went up San Juan hill

singing camp-meeting hymns. Paul and Silas sang the Philippian jail open and the keeper and his family into the kingdom of God. We have no mention of their quality or their range. True-hearted song is the Jacob's ladder that brings the angels down, the good Samaritan that lifts the fallen, the miracle of loaves and fishes that feeds the multitude.

Religious rheumatism sometimes affects the muscles of the entire face. It draws the corners of the mouth down and puts "crows'-feet" in the cheeks and furrows in the forehead. It comes from a mistaken idea that gloom is synonymous with glory. The people who are afflicted with this type of the malady are always serious and solemn and seem to be constantly either going to a funeral or coming from one. Such a couple once fell into the guardianship of a husky young grandson of five. They not only saturated him with the simplicity of their Puritan piety but tried to coat him also with its severities. Whistling on the Sabbath was worldly and any kind of frolic, even from a child, on that day was verging on the unpardonable. Going out to the stable one Sabbath, Rover, the old dog, came leaping dog-fashion and put his front paws on the boy's shoulders. The boy pushed him aside and said, "Rover, you wicked dog, you must not romp like that today." The family mule was standing inside the door, with his head hanging out over the closed lower half, his jaws and his ears alike prov-

ing gravity, the picture of Nirvana. The lad caught the suggestion, went up to the old mule and said, "Jack, you must be a good Christian; you look just like grandfather and grandmother."

There are lives, it is true, that have been so torn and devastated that it would be impossible to be light-hearted and gay. When the shadow of an open tomb follows one or the wreck of a ruined home lies ever before the eyes it is hard to laugh. "How can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land?" But Christ went through more than you ever went through or ever will go through, and though He was the man of sorrows the children gathered about Him as the angels gather about the throne. He must also have been a man of smiles. Religion in mourning is never contagious or inspiring. A drizzle never painted a cheek, neither did a sombre sky ever lift a lily. It is the warm radiance of the sun that does those things. It is the warm radiance of a happy face that lifts the faces and the hearts of the children. They are repelled by a solemn face, attracted by a sunny one. If you would escape the condemnation of being a stumbling block to these, massage the muscles of your face, push the down-turned corners up, brush the "crows'-feet" away and scatter benedictions as you go. When they looked on the face of Stephen it seemed like the face of an angel. It was so because the heart of an angel was back of it.

Religious rheumatism sometimes affects people

in the neck. This is one of the oldest and most persistent forms of the malady. Moses was wearied almost to death with it, for of nothing did he complain more constantly than the stiff-necked and perverse generation that grumbled and chafed about him.

This describes the person who refuses to give up the old for the new, who goes forward looking backward,—forward because he is in the crowd and the crowd is going forward, looking backward because he is wedded to the past. It describes the man who puts the headlight on the caboose and the green light on the engine. He is the man who refuses to approve of the individual communion cup because the scum-gathering common cup has been used a thousand years, who scorns the weekly envelope and the graded lesson because the fathers reached a good old age without them. He believes that age sanctifies everything. If you suffer from this form of malady, then back to the tallow candle, the spinning-wheel, the goose-quill, the sun dial, the harpsichord, and the cradle.

The manufacturer is ready to throw out the machine he bought last year for a better one on the market this year; the machinist is looking constantly for the latest in gears, wheels and shafts; the doctor is ready for the latest serum, the farmer for the latest implement. Why should the church come trudging along with a neck as crooked as a grapevine, prating upon the past and fearful of doing anything contrary to the

practices of the past? If God sent us into the twentieth century He expects us to avail ourselves of twentieth century methods and deliver a twentieth century message. The reason why so many preachers are preaching to varnish is the fact that they have their ears on the tombs of their ancestors. The men who spend their lives in the busy, throbbing, quivering, buzzing work of the world will not come into the church to hear a seance with the dead. They want a science from the living, and if the man in the pulpit cannot give them something that will cut the grease on Monday and lighten the burden on Tuesday and Wednesday and every other day until Sunday comes again, they will pass him as a dust-kicking auto passes a pedestrian, and with as little concern.

The reason why so many large churches are nothing but sleeping alligators sprawled on the shores of time, blinking weakly skyward and devouring an occasional preacher, is the fact that they are trying to live on ancestral religion. Eighteen hundred years after Abraham was gathered to his fathers the spiritually bankrupt Jews bragged to Jesus, "We be the children of Abraham," as though that was a key to the city of God. Now, if that wasn't working Abraham over-time then it was never done. Yet the world is full of churches that are doing that. They boast of the past, quote the past, rejoice in the past, do everything but reproduce its piety.

There are staunch Lutherans in the world at whom Luther would not deign to throw a bone. He refused to let others do his thinking; they wouldn't recognize an independent thought if it were labelled. There are such also among the followers of Wesley and Knox. They lived their own lives and shook the world; their idol-worshippers lie like chiseled dogs at their tombstones and do nothing.

“ My Church, my Church, my dear old Church,
My fathers' and my own ”

is perfectly proper in the house of God and ought to be sung, but let it be sung as the graves of our ancestors are decorated, only once in a while. The recurring hymns should be, “ Throw out the Life Line,” “ I'll go where You want me to go,” “ Onward, Christian Soldiers,” and those that challenge immediate and unreserved action.

Religious rheumatism sometimes affects the back. The man who suffers from this form of the malady is the man who can't bend, the man whose spine slipped down over his thigh bone and whose thigh bone jumped up into his back. He is not necessarily sombre but simply stiff, either through temperament or deliberate intention.

In the pulpit he is the man who preaches over the people. The Lord said, “ Feed my lambs,” but he feeds the giraffes, or at least tries to. He is invisible six days and incomprehensible the

seventh. He is as deep in his language as he is high in his manner, but his depth, as Spurgeon has said, like that of an old, dry well, contains nothing but a few sticks, a dead cat and some stones.

In the Sunday School he is the teacher who drops it on them instead of handing it to them. His manner, his language, his thought are all thirty years ahead of his pupils. His illustrations are the illustrations of maturity, his points the points of another world. He sees the children sent to be taught as the seclusive dame at a second story window sees through a reflector the agent at the door beneath. He drops his mental bouquets as circling aviators drop bouquets on the crowds below them. When the sunbeam comes ninety million miles to open the anemone and the violet, we surely ought to be able to cross the years and warm with a more sympathetic touch the hearts of the dear little children God has placed within our reach.

As Lowell and a friend were out walking one day, they came to the entrance of a Children's Home. Over the gateway they saw the words, "The Home for Incurable Children." As they passed the gate and walked on in pensive silence, Lowell said, "They will take me there some day." He was an incurable child. Only such will ever be able to do anything for a child. They will have none of the alabaster saint, however pure he be. They want and they have a right to want,

for he is the only one whom they can understand, the man with a boy's heart, the man who still knows how the kite pulls, how the hives itch, how the punk burns, how the pool draws,—the man who, like his Master, can draw his illustrations from the life of the crowd before him.

Oh, it is wonderful to be placed in charge of a planetary system; that is what happens when you are asked to guide ten or twenty souls, each of which is worth more than the world! Be sure that you guide them well. In one of England's many wars a young officer was ordered to guide a company of men across a desert in Africa and attack the enemy early the following morning. All night long they pushed their spectral way across the sands, all night long they had nothing but a little pocket compass to assure them that they were right. Early in the morning, long before the first streak of breaking day, there was a crack of a rifle and a flash of fire directly ahead. It reached its mark; the officer fell mortally wounded into the arms of a comrade and died, but not before he gasped, "Didn't I guide them straight!" Oh, may our parting words be as satisfying as they. They will if we come down to the level of the child and lead him as an elder brother.

Religious rheumatism often attacks the hand. When Pompeii was unearthed a man was found with his hand clutching a bag of gold. The supposition is that he had a chance to flee but came

back and perished with his money. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." This is probably one of the most common forms of this malady. When we read of one man so stingy that he docked his quarryman for time off when he was blown up by a premature blast, and of another who was so accustomed to pull down the price of things that he always sang "Ninety and Nine" when the preacher announced "Old Hundred," we laugh at the satire, but let us be sure that we are not living in glass houses before we cast stones.

How many of us have given in hundreds to the Lord? How many of us are giving one tenth? Captain Jack Crawford, the poet scout, makes no pretense at professional religion and says he does not know one church from another, but I saw him one Sunday empty both pockets on the plate in Sunday School and then go up to the church service immediately thereafter and have nothing to give there but an amused smile. Have you ever given your last? Speak softly when you call him heretic who has done it. We so easily satisfy and excuse ourselves when we set our few dollars beside the millionaire's hoard. But let us not forget that the great philanthropists gave as liberally in the days of their leanness as they do in the days of their plenty. Benevolence is not something that drops into our lives like a Christmas present while we are sleeping. It is something that we develop, it comes like an education,

like efficiency in music, painting or speech: it grows. But what growth in some lives!

There are oaks in Japan that are two centuries old and still standing in a flower pot. Such is the benevolence of some families. While others have grown to wide-branching, sheltering pavilions, they are the stunted pigmies of selfishness. Sam Jones said, "If God makes you, old sisters, wear in heaven what you give to his poor on earth, you won't go calling much the first few days." To the men who grind down their employees and keep all themselves he said, "If you don't go to hell it will be because that institution is burned out before you die."

Friends, the hands that were pierced for us were not clenched hands. Oh, they were clenched to save others, clenched to save Peter, clenched to lift the fallen, but never clenched to save self. They were open on the cross, open on the mount, open by the sea, open in invitation, open in warning, open in ascension, and are now gloriously open in welcome. Let the hands of His disciples be like His. What lines your palms may have may interest the palmist, what the length of your fingers is may interest the pianist, but your Lord and Master is interested in their mobility in contact, their tenderness of touch, their strength of appeal.

Religious rheumatism often affects the knees. As a general proposition every church member agrees that prayer is a good thing, but thousands

never turn to it as a personal privilege until the Lord ties them to a bed-post or a surgeon's table. They usually turn to every one else first, even the ward boss, as some one has well said, before they turn to God. They concede that prayer was the secret of Paul's power, of Luther's, of Wesley's, of Moody's. They fairly adore Daniel for throwing open his windows and praying thrice daily toward Jerusalem; they beam with admiration at Knox for asking God to give him Scotland; they cross their breast in veneration of Müller for maintaining an orphanage for sixty years by prayer; but as for themselves, they want to see the long green and the bricks before they plan for the future.

It is true that if all depended upon God for everything as Müller did, there would be none to bake bread or sew clothes or dig coal for those orphans. But it is also true that if all trusted God as little as most of us do, faith would have died before the mummies did. "O ye of little faith!" is still the cry of the Master as He looks toward His disciples. In most of our temporal affairs we could improve ourselves by prayer, and in all our spiritual affairs.

No man can approach his business with the poise that he ought to have who has not spent a little time in prayer with God. Clem Studebaker, the oldest of the five brothers who built up the greatest wagon works in America and later added the manufacture of automobiles to their

plant, never allowed a day to go by without sending a note, a card, a telegram or a telephone message home to his mother. It didn't matter how far he was away from home or how much it cost, daily the message went. It kept him close to the simplicities of his mother's knee. Oh, what sweetness and serenity fill the heart of him who daily sends a message home to God. In one of the fiercest debates of the British Parliament, when Disraeli was shooting gas bombs and shrapnel at Gladstone and making the very air reverberate with his thunder, Gladstone calmly sat at his desk and leisurely jotted down a few lines. When the cannonading ceased and Parliament adjourned, Gladstone arose and left the paper on his desk. Someone, thinking that Gladstone had forgotten the notes he made, went hastily to the desk to get them and take them to him. Instead of notes upon the speech of Disraeli, however, the volunteer found "Rock of Ages" written in English and in Latin.

"From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat:
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat."

Gladstone was a man of prayer.

In the spiritual life prayer is even more essential than in the material. A degree of what the world calls success may be obtained sometimes without prayer, but in the spiritual realm never.

Prayer is at the bottom of every achievement in the kingdom of God. Like the submerged stones of the river pier, it is often unobserved, but it is there as surely as the giant stones in the river bed.

Jonah brought wicked Nineveh to sackcloth and repentance, but Jonah prayed before he preached. Christ brought Lazarus from the tomb, but He prayed before He commanded. Billy Sunday says he would no more think of starting a revival without the prayer of the saints than he would think of beginning a baseball game without a ball and bat.

It is simply impossible to bring sinners to God without prayer. You may talk to the sinner until you have worn your teeth down to your gums and his heart will still be icy; you may fill him with oysters and ice cream and pay for it all yourself; you may use every ruse and device a clever ingenuity can conceive and he will be as unmoved as the boulder that sleeps among the summer breezes. But talk to God about it and something will happen. What most of the so-called Christians of the world have still to learn is that the shortest route to a sinner's heart is by way of the throne.

O Christians, ask the great Physician to cure your stiff, prayerless knees and start you on the path to the throne! You will never be a soul-winner until He does; you will never be anything else thereafter. It is the highway that shimmers with the light of glory and entrances with the

music of heaven. He who prays much enjoys heaven on the way to heaven. Christ said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." He was in heaven all the time He lived on earth. When He bids us follow Him He asks us to enjoy the same glory.

Religious rheumatism also affects the feet. There are hundreds singing, "I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord," who haven't moved an inch for twenty years and who couldn't be budged with a crow-bar. The only kind of going they ever did was going to seed, and carrot seed at that. They are too stiff to go to church when the church is only two squares away. Once in a while I meet an old pilgrim who tells me that in the years long gone he used to walk, with others, six and eight miles to church. Immediately the centuries seem to roll away and I am back with the old Crusaders. I see Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless walking from village to village and from city to city calling Europe together; I see families looking sadly at their abandoned homes, husbands giving wife and children goodbye; I see them journeying in growing companies through forests and mountains, valleys and plains, to their places of rendezvous; I see them kneeling before the high altar of the church and receiving the church's benediction; I see them issuing from the church and forming into line; I see them leaving their native country and pushing

through the forest fastnesses of southern Europe, singing, as the wild birds fly over their heads and strange scenes greet them day by day, the great Crusader Hymn; I see them, battle scarred and bronzed, in old Jerusalem, offering Godfrey the crown of gold, and I hear old Godfrey answer, "I cannot wear a crown of gold where my Lord once wore a crown of thorns."

Oh, what visions these old worshippers, who trudged miles to hear the precious word, bring to our eyes! They take us back to the heroic age, to the days when the church cried,

" Give me men to match my mountains,
Give me men to match my plains "

and when from under the thatched roof came the answer, " Here, Lord, am I."

How pitiful is the spiritual condition of the person who is too stiff in the feet to walk a few squares to hear the word of God. The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone, but the heathen in his eagerness will walk a hundred miles to hear the word of God and will go back home with it as gold hunters go back to civilization with their bag of gold.

Too stiff to walk to the house of God, they are logically too stiff to walk away from it. But you must come to the armory before you can go into the battle, approach the spring before you can give others to drink. What can a man tell

of the divine Redeemer who never meets him in His house where He is glorified? To carry the glory of the transfiguration down into the valley you must first climb the Transfiguration Mount.

Friends, the religion of Jesus Christ is a religion of action. It is like the bicycle, it falls to the ground when it is not moving. "Come Ye" and "Go Ye" are words for the living, not the dead. Are you moving? Are you on the roll or rolling on? Dead men are on the roll, on the assessor's roll, the bank directors' roll, the census roll, the church roll. But no dead men are rolling on. If you are rolling on, at what speed and to what effect? The snail is rolling on and it makes reasonably good progress,—for a snail. But God expects more of you than that. God expects the kind of rolling on that the engineer expects when his engine is filled with steam, the kind of rolling that makes the forests echo and the mountains melt away, the rolling that carries a thousand tons along and still has power to shout the gospel of its power abroad. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Oh, what miracles would be performed if the children of God had swifter feet and used them.

When Paul was converted he went "straightway into the synagogues" and preached Christ. When Moody was converted he immediately began to tell the story, although he was told that he could probably serve the Lord better by being

quiet. When Jerry McCauley was cleansed he immediately began to hunt others who needed cleansing. When the old fisherman fell under conviction in McCauley's mission he said, "O Lord, if You ever pardon me You will never hear the last of it." Surely if the Master came all the way from glory to save us from our sins He deserves more from us than the listless ambling that we give him now.

When the fierce Ashantee tribe of Africa broke out into war and the captain of the Scotch Guards drew up his men at Windsor, telling them that all who wished to volunteer for service against the Ashantees should step forward while he turned his back, the whole line stepped forward. When the Greeks won one of their memorable victories a herald sent to carry the tidings home ran with such speed that after shouting "Victory!" in the midst of queenly Athens he fell over dead. Oh, for some of the self-abandonment of the warriors! Why should it not be so, when we fight for Him who never lost a battle and always directs the battle from the battle's front?

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus
Constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst the church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail."

Then up and away, God's grenadiers! The world lies before you, but it is God's world and He wants you to recapture it for Him. Fight as crown princes for your inheritance; battle for God if it takes the last drop of blood you have and sends you to your grave forty years before your time. There is a great day ahead, when the battle scarred and the brave of all the ages will sweep in grand pageantry up the streets of gold to the great white throne, and only those who bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord will be in the throng.

"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

OUR BESIEGING ENEMIES

"Mine enemies would swallow me up all the day long, for they be many that fight proudly against me."

Psalm 56:2.

It is a good day for man when he looks the serious things of life in the face and reckons with things as they are. It is a better day when he talks them over with God.

That was what David did in the midst of a wild and rushing career. There were hardly two days in his stormy life alike. Now he was before Goliath, now the idol of the army, now the ward of Saul, now the refugee, now the cave dweller, now king, now writing songs, now weeping at the death of an unnamed boy, now agonizing over Absalom, now climbing the crystal sky of holy contemplation, now falling like a shot eagle into the canyon of sin. If Shakespeare's was the universal mind, David's was the universal experience. No ransomed sinner in heaven will be able to relate anything to David without drawing from his lips the confession, "From that sin I also was redeemed." No poet or monk will be able to outshine him in holy reminiscence.

The charming part of David's life was his unbroken, persistent tendency to turn toward God.

Whether in joy or in sorrow, in sin or in virtue, in smiles or in tears, his heart sought God as the needle seeks the pole. Such a man may sin but he will not sin long.

Out of the midst of one of his trying times he looks up toward God and exclaims, "Mine enemies would daily swallow me up, for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High."

Who his particular enemies were matters not; his battles are fought, his victory won and his crown secured. Ours are still raging and the enemies that surround us are the ones we want to think of today.

In childhood's simple days we thought of a city's fortifications as a single fort mounted on some commanding eminence overlooking the city. We know now that instead of there being but one bulwark defending a city, there are often concentric circles of forts, each inner circle stronger than the outer.

So I want you to think of yourself today. You are a city, situated on the river of time, close by the ocean of eternity. Before you, desirous of your capture and subjugation, are all the forces of evil, which are now or will shortly press upon you as persistently as the Germans pressed upon Antwerp.

Your outer line of fortifications is the line of faith. We often speak of the fall of man in Eden as a fall through appetite, but appetite was the third fort to fall. The first force that the

devil hurled against our ancestors was the force of skepticism against faith. God placed them in a garden with many liberties and but one prohibition. There was one tree that was not to be visited and a certain fruit that was not to be eaten. It matters not one whit what it was or how you interpret Eden, the effect is the same.

The devil came along and said, "You will not die; God knows that when you eat your eyes will be opened and that you will be wise as He." That was the first assault upon the human race, and when they believed him and doubted God the first fort fell. Faith is always the first fort attacked, for until it falls the other lines of forts surrounding us cannot be assaulted. It was so in the fall of Samson, of Saul, of Judas, of all who ever fell. The Bible may not give us the particulars about the first steps of their fall but there is a progression in the capture of a soul by sin as fixed and as orderly as the progression of the Germans toward Antwerp. Before any man is brought low by indifference or dissipation or pessimism or despair he loses faith in the living God and the things He loves.

The enemy facing your outer fortifications of faith today is more numerous than ever in the history of the world.

You were taught at your mother's knee the name of God and told what a wonderful Creator and Father He is. Now some one tells you there is no God. He is not here in great numbers and

his guns are not very strong, but he bombards you sometimes and raises the question. Fire back at him the ammunition of God's old reliable arsenal, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." If the man who simply says that in his heart is a fool, what a knave must be the man who has the audacity to say it to another.

You were taught in your childhood the precious name of Jesus, and long before you knew the meaning of the words you were already singing the songs that proclaim Him the Saviour of the world: "Christ hath for Sin the Atonement Made," "There is a Fountain filled with Blood," "Jesus paid it All." How often you have sung them, how precious they have become! Now Mr. Wiseacre comes along and says the miraculous birth of Jesus is a myth, Christ was not the incarnation of God but a representative, the resurrection is a legend, the crucifixion a great moral lesson, not an atonement.

You ask him how many churches rest on a human saviour, how much that human saviour of his has done for the world. Ask him how many sinners were made whole by his human saviour, how many drunkards were saved, how many harlots restored, how many criminals redeemed. The city missions throughout the world are full of such men. Ask him how many city missions are preaching a human saviour. Ask the men themselves, after they have finished singing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," what man-

ner of person this Jesus is and they will answer like Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God." Ransomed men are never heretics, only theorists are.

A human saviour! You might as well hitch a draft horse to a freight train and expect him to pull it as to expect a human saviour to pull a world out of sin. The strength of a horse is not an adequate cause; live steam under gigantic pressure alone will do it. Christ coming down from heaven to earth and crowding his divinity into our narrow humanity furnished the steam required to draw this old world of ours out of its ancient evils. When the power of Almighty God was crowded into the piston chambers of human limitations the train began to move. The power that makes men happy and the power that carries the race like a train toward the day of perfection is the power of a divine, not a human, Saviour. And I enjoin you to fight to your last breath any one who assaults this fort of your faith.

You were taught in your childhood that the Bible is the word of God. Your receptive little mind was made a veritable mosaic of sacred scripture. You were told that it is not only our infallible rule of faith but also of practice. Here again your faith is assaulted. High-brows tell you it is the book of pious men, climbing up God's altar stairs, lofty indeed but still the book of men; and proceeding on that assumption, they study it as they study a cat in the laboratory, cutting it

this way and cutting it that way, until nothing but the skeleton remains. If you want to waste a lot of time and lose a lot of religion study the higher critics. If you want to improve your time and your religion study the highest critic. What does the Master say about the Bible — the Old Testament, the only part that He had and the part on which the critics are see-sawing today? He knew it from beginning to end, it was his only text book. When He entered the Synagogue at the beginning of his ministry and commented extemporaneously upon a chapter of Isaiah He alluded to no less than twenty books of the Old Testament. He knew his Bible. What did He think of it? Listen! He is in the upper room, praying for his disciples. "Father, I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. I pray for them. Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth." The critic says the Bible contains truth. Jesus says it is truth. If it only contains truth, why is it still intact? If your ring only contains gold the fire will melt the dross away; if it is pure gold fire will not hurt it. This book has been burned in public bonfires in a hundred different cities. Have they destroyed it, have they reduced it? You have the same Bible that Luther read four hundred years ago, the same Bible that King Alfred read a thousand years ago. This cannot be said of human books. Livy wrote one hundred and forty books and only thirty-five remain; Eschylus wrote one hundred

dramas and only seven remain; Varro wrote the biographies of over seven hundred famous Romans and all are lost. Time is a consuming flame to human products but it touches not nor mars the things of God.

You were taught from your earliest infancy to reverence the church as the institution of Jesus Christ and the church building as the very sanctuary of the Most High God. What sacred memories cluster about the church of our childhood! It may not have been "the little brown church in the vale"; it may have been on the mountains, perhaps in the woods, perhaps in the city. But whether here or there it was the house of God and stood, for you, as the one divinely founded, divinely sustained institution through which God hopes to redeem the world.

Since those happy days broad-minded men and some as shallow as they are broad have tried to tell us that the church is simply one of the many institutions of man for the improvement of the race and that it contains about as many errors and as much hypocrisy as the others do. They would bring the church down to the level of lodges, peace tribunals, and culture cults. The church is no more one of them than a mother is one of her children or the sun one of her planets or the tree one of its branches. These are the offsprings of the church and bear only certain traits and characteristics of the church.

The church is not a benevolent organization,

sent here to open soup houses, hospitals and asylums; she is not an educational institution founded for the purpose of educating people in lofty ideals and noble themes; she is not a social center instituted for the purpose of giving the people a chance to gather amid pure and holy surroundings; she is not an industrial umpire intended to decide between capital and labor, she is not a political pilot intended by God to guide the ship of state. She is back of all these as the inspirer and comforter. They are only phases of her work — she is greater than all. She sends them out as the Master sent out His disciples and watches and prays over them and gives toward them, and while they may come and go, succeed and fail, as the apostles did, she, like the Master, stands secure.

When man assaults your faith in the church, fire back at him the old ball that the Master fired, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It has been fired a million times or more and has never broken in the discharge.

Guard well every one of these objects of your faith on the outer line of your fortifications. Above all, do not let yourself be deluded into believing that because these faiths are old they are therefore outworn. You are still using sunshine and water and air and wheat and wood and they are older than all these doctrines that have nourished and conserved the church. You do not discard water because it was once drained from the

gourd, neither do you spurn wheat because it was once ground into flour by slave women. Why should you discard the old elements of spiritual vitality? The fact that they have outlived the over-emphasis, and misinterpretation of the past only emphasizes their divine reality.

But enough of the outer line of forts. While they are the most important there are others on the inner lines that need vigilance as well.

The second line is the line of the will, which is attacked by the forces of indifference. As soon as the volleys of skepticism have battered down the ramparts of faith the forces of indifference rush in upon the will. Before faith gives way the will has little defensive work to do. Only an occasional stray shot reaches it and never with any damage.

Do you waver, when Sunday comes, between your house and God's? Do you hesitate, in a bargain, between the wisdom of the Word and the wisdom of the world? Does prayer bore you, do temperance meetings tire you, do missions weary you? Do you slip sometimes on the second commandment, do you trip on the ninth? Are you callous and careless in things that once received your utmost attention?

If you are, know then that your outer line of defence has fallen and the enemy is pressing upon the second. As a matter of fact, that is where most people are being assaulted. If you are one

of them, end the assault upon your soul at once, for the farther in the hosts of sin advance the fiercer will be the fight and the more difficult to resist.

Be not deceived by the apparent harmlessness of indifference. It means more than one less in church when you stay at home: it means one more exposed to the dangers of the churchless, godless world. When Rev. Guy Mark Pearse sat with the great Spurgeon in his pulpit, he remarked to Spurgeon during the singing of a hymn, "You will never know how much good you did me when I sat down there Sunday after Sunday and heard you preach. You wound me up like an eight day clock." Everything deteriorates in this world: the violin drops a tone, the razor loses its edge, the spark plug gathers carbon, the battery weakens, the watch runs down. We need a regular tuning, a repeated sharpening, a constant winding up. The house of God is the place in which these things are done.

It is more than one less in a crusade if you stay away: it is one more exposed to the very dangers that the crusade is trying to obliterate. You can't refuse to help exterminate an evil without exposing yourself to it, for moral taint, like physical taint, lays quickest hold upon the inactive. Woodsmen know not what consumption is. It lays the sedentary low.

It means more than one less engaged in a religious exercise when you cease to pray. Prayer

is more than a psychological massage. It is the open mouth of the bird in the nest, the sighting of the mariner out at sea, the clasping of a father's hand in the dark. It is the soul's whisper into the ear of God. Neglect it and you lose the inspiration of personal contact with God and shrivel into a religious pigmy.

Oh no, indifference is not to be turned away with a smile! It is the hectic flush that foretells the end, the sultry calm that precedes the storm. Throw back the indifference that assails you with the volley of Christian consecration. Lend a hand, an elbow, a shoulder, two shoulders, all that you have to every good work that comes your way and things divine will take on new meaning. We are most interested in the bank in which we have our deposit, in the college in which we have our boy, in the store in which we have our goods. Things divine will never be interesting until we put something in them.

But there are some with whom the battle has shifted to the third line of fortifications. With faith reduced and the will crushed, they are now fighting the things of appetite. The forces of dissipation are the ones that are pressing upon them today. Life to them has reduced itself to the "eat, drink and be merry" policy. Some are sipping the pleasures of life daintily, as the bee fills its pouch with honey, some, lower fallen, are finding their pleasures, like foraging dogs among garbage cans, in secret and in darkness; others

find their gratification in shameless, open debauchery and are in sin as the swine wallow in their filth.

Untold thousands are pushed back upon this line and are fighting the most pitiful fight this old world of sin and sorrow ever knew. The other assaults on the outer lines can be met with a clear mind and strong nerves but here the battle is fought with broken weapons. From the first indulgence dissipation reduces the resisting power of both body and soul. It is a slow paralysis, a rheumatic progression, a cardiac hardening that leaves us weaker as the burden increases.

Talk not harshly, ye who were nurtured in the green-house fragrance of a Christian home, when you see the bloated wretch and the painted commoner go down after a trial or two at better living. They may have put more teeth-gritting, fist-clenching fight into those few days of decency than you have put in your fifty smug years.

“What’s done we partly may compute,
But know not what’s resisted.”

O brother of the battling garrison, with the hot shells of temptation pouring upon you and the hissing fuses of desire burning within you, don’t give up the battle. The vilest has been redeemed and so may you. Jere McCauley and Samuel Hadley slept in barrels and rolled in gutters before the Lord helped them to their feet and to a

throne. John L. Sullivan was dead drunk when his household furniture was taken from his home to pay his debts and now he is under a five year contract to go up and down the country preaching temperance. When the old cobbler of Nantucket laid his hand on the shoulder of the town drunkard and said, "There is one who can help you, John," he little dreamed that he was speaking the magic words to a future great reformer. But under that dirty hat and ragged coat was John B. Gough, who for forty fruitful years was to preach the gospel of temperance to all the world.

Oh, it is wonderful how God can take human junk and remold it into the likeness of His Son.

Don't let your past failures oppress you, brother. Washington lost more battles than he won, but he won the Revolution. It is not the number of battles won that wins the victory but the winding up of the war. Trust in God and stand your ground and victory will be yours though all hell oppose you. Never mind the odds against you. Nothing is impossible with God.

When the Japs were storming Port Arthur in the Russian-Japanese war, the message was sent back to Japan, "It is impossible to take Port Arthur." Immediately the message flashed back, "The Mikado expects his soldiers to do the impossible." And the fort was taken. God expects you to do the impossible also, because "He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world."

THE ICY HAND OF GOD

"He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes; he casteth forth his ice like morsels."

Psalm 147: 16.

The beautiful snow is a delightful theme for contemplation in the torrid days of August, and the picture of snow-covered Matterhorn the choicest art. But about the latter part of March we are willing to make a voluntary assignment of all our interest in every piece of such poetry or art to any one who wishes it.

The succession of the seasons, as we know it in the temperate zone, is probably the most pleasing arrangement the Lord ever gave to man. Yet, like children with their toys, we often grow weary of the very thing we longed for most. Of nothing do we grow weary more quickly than of winter. Frozen pipes and frozen hydrants, frozen pavements and frozen roads soon freeze our enthusiasm. And when the time comes to hand zero weather over to the southern hemisphere we do it with the same relief that the sheriff of one state feels when he hands a desperado over to the sheriff of another.

But in the text I discover that the hand of God is in the frost and the snow and the ice and so it

cannot be an unmitigated evil, if it be an evil at all.

As the cotton picker picks the cotton from his basket and throws it into the gin, God gives the snow; as the husband scatters ashes in the mire, so He scattereth hoar frost; as the wife throws out the crumbs for the birds in winter, the hand of God casts forth the ice. The picture is homely but the text is striking in its language and clear in its message. It tells us as soon as we read it that the hand of God is in nature. There was a time when this was undisputed. In primitive ages every phenomenon of nature had its particular god. The thunderbolt had its god, the harvest and the sea had theirs. Everything in physical nature, everything in human nature, was under the superintendence of some divinity. Jewish and Christian thought associated the things of nature not with many gods but with one God, the God above all gods.

Science with its telescope, its microscope and its crucible has reduced many of the phenomena of nature to law. The ocean currents, the trade winds, the rise and fall of temperature, the snow, the rain, the frost and the ice all follow fixed and immutable laws, and from certain conditions we know what will happen tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. In the realm of astronomy we even know what will happen a century from now.

The result has been that law has pushed God so far into the background, to many minds, that He is almost excluded from His universe entirely.


But law without interested personality is nothing. If system and law suffice, then why send an engineer with a engine, a captain with a ship, a general with an army? God did more than press the button and start the exposition. "The voice of the Lord is upon many waters." "He maketh the clouds His chariots." "He cutteth out rivers among the rocks and marks the path for the lightning." "He notes the sparrow's fall." These are not the deeds of an "absentee God." They are the work of Him Who never sleeps and never forgets His own. They bring God very near, not only to us but to the world of nature that surrounds us. We virtually hear his voice in the music of the birds, the whispering of the winds, the surging of the sea.

But you say there is not much comfort in the nipping, biting, shrieking winds of winter and nothing very gracious in the thaw and the ice. Are you sure? Would God send them if they were not good, when "all things work together for good"? The very way in which the Psalmist describes God giving the snow proves a benevolent purpose. "He giveth snow like wool." Wool is used for warmth. All farmers know that snow is a protection to the wheat in the ground, a blanket to keep and guard the coming harvest during its infant slumber.

And has the frost no purpose? Farmers lament the fact that they have so much spraying to do, so many insects to kill, so many scales to

poison. But they would have a great many more if the Lord would not kill a few quadrillions himself. The night winds that sting our cheeks and sometimes make us shiver in our houses are the executioners of countless pests that prey upon the grain of the fields and the fruits of the orchards and the human beings who enjoy them. And but for them we should have a losing battle to fight against our enemies. What would become of us if the flies and the mosquitoes were not almost exterminated once a year? The flies can lay forty eggs in a single night and each becomes the parent of millions of offsprings; the mosquito lays eggs that hatch the same afternoon and become the parent of between one and two million more in a single month. We should be poisoned to death, if not worried to death, if the icy hand of God would not intervene and execute these insect desperadoes for us. The hand that scatters snow and frost is the hand that saves the world.

In this thought I find a precious message for the soul. The cheek is not the only part of man that feels the icy blast of winter winds. The soul's teeth chatter too, sometimes. We think, when we are pushing our way through the wind and the snow, that we are doing all that we can in resistance to the elements. But the mother who has given up her child, the husband who has lost his wife, the wife who has lost her husband, the friend who has been betrayed by a friend, has faced a fiercer and a colder blast than ever swept



our streets or snapped our trees. Nature's wintry storms last but a few days; the storm of the soul outlasts the winters of Iceland. Oh, how cold, how cruel does the hand of God seem then! How indifferent His heart! But remember the snow and the ice of the river and the field and know that God cares more for you than He does for the tree that perishes and the grass that withers.

“ Behind his frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.”

You may wonder sometimes why your sorrow had to come upon you, when others less devout and less careful escaped, and you may perhaps resist the inference that your sorrow was sent to you because you were in special need of purging. Ah, friends, God does not always send our afflictions to save or purge our own lives but to purge the lives of us all. We all fill up with worldliness; sins of various kinds creep in and they must be slain. Our common humanity would perish without it. Winter must be sent somewhere. If all got what they deserved it would smite us all. But if all were smitten the work of the world would suffer. We should be in a state of constant mental and business paralysis. So God sends the cold wave only over some souls as He does only over some states. Some soul must catch the worst, others will catch it in a lesser degree. All by it are purged and made better.

How biting, how chilling was the blast that struck poor Mrs. McKinley when her great Christian husband closed his eyes and left her alone. Oh, it was dark and it was cold! How the night winds howled through her soul, how the north wind raved, how bleak and barren was everything! But the whole country shared her sorrow and participated also in the purging. The day in which the President was in Buffalo to deliver his speech the country was boasting of its great wealth and prestige, feeling like Nebuchadnezzar on top of his palace. The next day the nation was on its knees imploring God to spare their chief executive, and all the selfishness of the nation was frozen at the fountain.

The icy hand of God sends such wintry blasts and some homes must be in the center of the path. What God did to the whole nation through the sorrow of its executive mansion He often does to a community through the sorrows of a cottage. That He chooses to send the blast in the direction of your home now should not be strange or alarming. All homes meet it sometime. When it comes our way, let us remember that it is more than a personal grief. Let us see in it the general blessing conveyed through our sufferings to our fellow men. This will turn our darkened chamber into a new Calvary and lift our personal grief into another atonement.

Yet, sorrow is sorrow and winter is winter, and

in spite of all our rosy interpretations our personal grief will likely overwhelm us and stun and perhaps prostrate us when it comes our way. That it should is not surprising. The frost that blesses the earth crumbles it first into billions upon billions of particles. But for the pulverizing of the soil by the frost the farmer's ploughing would be in vain. God ploughs first, then man. If the icy hand of God breaks up the field before the field can yield its harvest, why should it seem strange that we must be broken up before we can yield?

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole."

The fruitlessness of many lives is due to the absence of sorrow. The frost has never broken them up and they have developed a hard-packed selfishness as barren as the city alley. The world is full of vocalists who could sing beautifully if the tremulo of an open tomb were added to their register. The world is full of preachers who could preach comfortingly if the Master's wilderness were added to their ease.

Our lives are like the iron bands that the mediæval prince is said to have stretched from his castle to a hill across the valley. He expected the winds that swept the valley to play them as a giant harp. But they were as silent as the ore of the mountain. Finally, however, when a forest-levelling storm came along the music came.

Then it sounded as though all the choirs of heaven had rushed to the open gates to give the earth a baptism of harmonic glory. They needed the terrific to produce the beautiful.

So do we. Oh, let us look ahead when sorrow comes and thank God that we are counted worthy to suffer and fit to bless. "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." Let us go to our western window and, looking across to the windows of our Father's mansion, say with Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

"I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea
Come drifting home with broken masts and sails;
I shall believe the hand which never fails,
From seeming evil worketh good for me;
And though I weep because those sails are battered,
Still will I cry, while my best hopes lie shattered,
I trust in Thee."

"I will not doubt, though sorrows fall like rain,
And troubles swarm like bees about a hive;
I shall believe the heights for which I strive
Are only reached by anguish and by pain;
And though I groan and tremble with my crosses,
I yet shall see, through my severest losses,
The greater gain."

A SPRIG OF EVERGREEN

"The hope which is laid up for you in heaven."

Col. 1:5.

Among the many stories that have come down to us from the misty realm of fable there is one which tells us of two brothers to whom was jointly assigned the task of filling the world with inhabitants. One of them was to do the work, the other superintend it.

One after another the different animals were made,— this one endowed with swiftness of foot, that one with strength of limb, another with cunning. Some were given fins, some wings, some claws, some feathery coverings, some scaly. So prodigal were they with their gifts that when they came to endow man they had practically nothing left but undesirable curses, which of course they would not give. While in their quandary Prometheus, one of the brothers, said, "I'll carry a torch to the sun and ignite it and give man the gift of fire. With that he will be able to forge for himself weapons and make himself mightier than all creatures." As it was said, so it was done. He carried his torch to the sun and brought back to man the last best gift of nature.

The gift of fire so incensed Jupiter, so runs the

ancient story, that he immediately had Prometheus chained to the Caucasus, to be preyed upon by vultures, and the people who received the fire punished by the creation of woman. All the gods of Olympus contributed to her composition. Venus gave her beauty, Mercury persuasion, Apollo music; hence she was called Pandora, which means all-gifted. She was made so attractive that she would be sure to beguile man and bring upon him the vengeance that Jupiter felt toward him.

It so happened that the other brother was the one who received her as his spouse. It was not long, of course, until he told her of the jar of curses that he had sealed in his closet and of his desire to keep them there. They were the curses that he had left after endowing the lower creatures with their various gifts. But one day, in his absence, her curiosity overcame her and she slipped to the jar to see what was actually in it. That was enough. The lid was hardly open before out flew the plagues that have since been the curse of the human race,—gout, rheumatism, chills and fevers for the body, and envy, spite, malice and revenge for the mind.

She did, however, manage to shut the lid in time to keep in one thing,—a blessing that had been overlooked, and that blessing was hope, the priceless possession of the whole human race. Hope has been called the poor man's bread, but hope is the manna that feeds the race. Go where you

will, question whom you may, you will discover that the propelling motive of all activity is hope. It is the altar that is always crowded.

Ask the little boy as he toddles off the first morning to school, with his plump little face and his clean little hands, what it is that takes him there and his eyes will tell you, if his tongue will not, that it is hope, the hope of a stronger mind. Ask the apprentice as he sweats at the forge and reddens at the hearth what it is that keeps him in that pandemonium of rattling steel and molten iron, and he will tell you by his movements, if his lips will not, that it is hope that keeps him there, hope of the mastery of his craft. Go take your stand where the immigrants land and ask them why they turned their backs on all that the human heart holds dear, and the eagerness of their faces, the vivacity of their vernacular, the sturdy grasp on their bundles, declare in language that all men understand that hope has brought them here.

Hope fills every sail that skims the sea. It guides the birds in their migrations. It fills the prisoner's cell with light. It is the star that shines on every pathway, the breeze that kisses every brow. Men may rob us of our gold, armies may deprive us of our homes and sickness may filch from us our health, but there is a birthright that no force on earth can take from us, the birthright of our hope. We can hope even though history mocks us and prophecy assures us nothing.

We are so constituted, thanks to a loving heavenly Father, that even though we have nothing steadfast to fix our hope upon, we can still find pleasure in indulging in the delusions of hope.

There are many whose pathway is strewn with wrecked fortunes, lost prestige, ruined loves, shattered health, who heroically plod on in the fond delusion that somewhere the road will bend and open up to them a grander life than that they once possessed. Poor, sad gentry of the broken heart, how well it is that their souls can feed upon "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." But it is not of earth's varying or fleeting hopes that we wish to speak. Our text brings before our attention "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." It turns our attention from the rainbow allurements of this world to the eternal realities of the other, from time and change, with its ceaseless ebb and flow, to that higher orb where æons melting into æons never blast a single joy.

And what is that hope laid up for you in heaven? One of the hopes is the hope of ideal conditions. How full is this world of injustice and greed! There is hardly a hamlet, city or town in the world where human lives are not being crushed to feed the greed of sinful men. In hardly anything else do the poets and seers so universally agree as they do in this; against nothing else are they so strong in their denunciation.

Hood shows it in the song of the shirt. Pic-

turing a woman in a dingy attic, plying her needle and thread with weary fingers and heavy eyes that men might profit and gorge with wealth, he exclaims in fierce denunciation:

“ O men with loving sisters,
O men with mothers and wives,
It is not the linen you’re wearing out
But human creatures’ lives.
Stitch — stitch — stitch
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once with a double thread
A shroud as well as a shirt.”

Whittier shows it in the “Prisoner for Debt.”
There was an old man cast into prison for a small
debt and shared his cell and bed with a murderer.

“ Just God, why lies that old man there?
A murderer shares his bed,
Whose eyeballs through his horrid hair
Gleam on him fierce and red.”

From the poem we learn that the old man had dropped some of his blood on Bunker Hill and Whittier justly sneers at the patriotism that shouts for freedom and lets patriots rot. Markham shows the same resentment against the economic oppression of our present system of society in his “Man with the Hoe.”

Since woman is the chief sufferer, the men of heart and brain are bringing the chivalry of King Arthur’s knights down to date. They are plung-

ing into literature and politics as the ancient warriors plunged into the forest, and are doing much to relieve the oppressed and punish the oppressor. Yet much that pains the heart remains and will no doubt for many years to come; for greed is hydra-headed. In heaven that spirit will not be found. The oppressor, with all that defiles, will be outside.

Men have tried to establish ideal conditions here on earth. The early church did it when its members sold their possessions and tried to live on terms of fraternal equality and unlimited trust, but it failed. The Brook Farm experiment was another and more recent attempt, but it failed too. Plato's "Republic," Moore's "Utopia," Bellamy's "Looking Backward" all tried to show the world the ideal way of living and their suggestions are as beautiful as the colors of the rainbow, beautiful enough to make the world a heaven. But the world read them, exclaimed "Excellent," and passed on to crush and grind and maul for gold as before the books were written.

What a treasure is the hope of a better life in heaven to those who are oppressed, those who help to dye the garments they weave with their own blood. The sure knowledge that in the other world God's children shall be free and know no service but the service of love is the richest spring along life's flinty pathway. Equally precious is the hope to those whose sympathies go out to those who suffer, the rare, heroic souls who weep



with those who weep and give themselves a living sacrifice to the cause of the poor.

Another hope that is laid up for you in heaven is the hope of clearer understanding. Here we see through a glass darkly, both each other and our God.

It is said that the late Prof. Blackie, one of Scotland's educational idols, one day rebuked a boy for lifting his left hand while at the black-board. The professor had told his boys always to raise the right hand upon completing work at the board. This the offending lad had heard. "The other hand," said Professor Blackie, as he saw the boy's left hand go up. The boy pulled down the hand and started to lift the right elbow but stopped and put the left hand up again. Louder than before and in a tone that indicated temper the professor said, "I said the right hand, sir." The boy with a bashful flush pulled the stump from his right pocket and said, "I hae nae right hand, Professor." The professor, crushed with the pitiful answer, went up to the boy and, putting his arm on his shoulder, said, "My bairn, I dinna ken, I dinna ken."

Oh, how much suffering could be avoided if we only knew! How many unkind words would remain unsaid, how many cruel deeds remain undone!

A romping boy, one night, the fourth time ignoring his father's "Now be quiet," was sent

unkissed and unblessed to bed. The room was quiet then. The father took up his paper, the mother her sewing. But after a space they caught each other gazing at the wall. "Why don't you read?" said mother. "Why don't you sew?" said father. Presently he threw the paper aside and stole up the stairway himself. As he leaned over his boy he saw that his eyes were shut but his lashes wet. He kissed him then and lay down beside him and that night two bad boys were in that bed. Poor father, he did not know, he did not understand how hard it is for a boy to be quiet and climb disgraced the attic stairs alone.

Many years before this father misunderstood his boy, a boy misunderstood his father. The restraints of home were too strong for him and he said one day, "Father, I'm going away." The father let him go and gave him a goodly purse with which to pay his expenses while abroad and come back home, if perchance, he should weary of the land of strangers. But his son was extravagant and spent all that he had and in the course of time was in rags. Then he came unto himself, then he understood the goodness of his father's heart and the shelter of his father's house. But alas, he was sitting among swine and feeding upon their husks. The fool and the swine soon mess together.

Half the nettles in our pillows are grown on the bushes of misunderstanding. The boy does not understand the reason for his father's sever-

ity and goes away to rue his folly; the father does not understand the boy's romping noise and turns aside to mourn his impatience.

How beautiful the hope that assures us of a place where we shall know as we are known, where in the crystal clearness of eternal day the spectres of doubt and suspicion, misunderstanding and mistrust shall be dissolved. It lures us as the music of a dream.

How good it seems to have a misunderstanding adjusted even here. The whole atmosphere seems to be clarified as by the ozone following a storm, and even though the clouds of the sky lower over us we feel the exuberance of a sunny summer morn. If it gives such pleasure to have misunderstandings cleared here on earth, what must be the rapture awaiting us there, where the mist shall be lifted and the doubt dissolved forever? It will seem to some like the warm summer sun to a miner after an imprisonment in the mines, like the break of day after a night's groping in a tangled forest.

Another hope laid up for you in heaven is the hope of eternal zest.

Here the happiest man has his periods of depression, the strongest mind its seasons of languor. There come into all lives times when the firm grasp on things becomes weak and nervous, periods when we almost wish we were any person but the person we are. The perpetual travel of the human race bears witness to this fact. Men of America run to Europe to catch new zeal and

come back re-made. Men of Europe run to America on a similar purpose. Men of the north, growing weary of the grind, take a trip to the south; the men of the south come north. And those who have not the money with which to pay for a journey find their substitute for travel in a book. Almost all the reading of fiction, when reduced to its ultimate analysis, is simply the mind's way of forgetting its weary plodding and seeking refreshment in the doings of another.

Kings feel the satiety as well as their subjects, the stars of the stage as well as their admirers, the clowns of the circus as well as those who laugh at their antics. The one sometimes thinks that the other knows it not, but they have only to ask each other to discover that they are brethren.

The boy looks up at the millionaire and feels sure that if he had the money that he has he would eat ice cream three times a day and have a private soda fountain in his office. The millionaire, with the money but no stomach, looks at the boy and says:

“ Blessings on thee, my little man,
Bare-foot boy with cheeks of tan,
With thy merry whistled tunes
And thy turned up pantaloons,
With thy red lips, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
From my heart I wish thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy.”

Thus it runs. The slough of satiety is the place where king and peasant meet.

But there is a land where the spirit never ebbs, where the interest never lags, where every moment is supreme. How it is possible we do not know, but as heaven itself is a miracle we have no difficulty in believing that feature of its life.

We do know that when an object sufficiently strong is placed before us it can absorb our attention and keep languor away for a very long period of time.

A monk of the middle ages, wondering how the Psalmist's thousand years of the Lord could be as a day, according to an ancient legend, went into the woods one day to ponder upon the mystery. There he heard birds singing with such ineffable sweetness that he lost all thought, for a long time, of anything but the music. Looking up after having listened long and intently, he saw the purple shades of twilight appear against the sky and went back to the monastery to his brethren. But he was a stranger among strangers. The only familiar things he saw were the grim old monastery walls. While trying to unravel the mystery and locate himself, one of the monks brought him an ancient record containing the names of all the monks who had lived there in the past, and lo, he discovered that he had left the monastery a thousand years before and that all his brethren were dead. He had discovered through the entrancing

music of the birds how it is possible for a thousand years to be as a day.

It is but a legend, but it tells a truth. Place before the mind something sufficiently strong and you can hold it any length of time, without an indifferent or languid moment. God has in store for us enough to keep us interested with the intensest rapture through eternity. O blessed hope laid up for us in heaven! I would not give it up for all the wealth of all the world! I would not surrender it for the earth, were it one entire and perfect diamond and I great enough to wear it! It lures me as the ocean lures the river, it calls me as the southland calls the birds!

Another hope laid up for you in heaven is the hope of recovery.

While life has much to give it has also much to ask. Time is a most insistent beggar. From the time that the child cries for its lost toy until the old man follows his last friend to the grave, life is one succession of surrenders. The years strip us of our friends as Autumn winds denude the trees.

In the midst of the process our minds often become the battling ground of conflicting emotions. Sometimes, when the homesick feeling for a long lost friend becomes acute, we exclaim with Job of old, "Oh that I were as in months past!" The heart almost breaks for the sound of the voice that is hushed and the touch of the hand that is still. But when the thought of the necessity of going through it all again occurs, should the dear ones

return, we are more likely to exclaim with David, "Oh that I had the wings of the dove, then would I fly away and be at rest." We all know the restless homesick feeling that tells us of our loss and points us to the place of restoration.

Longfellow, after the death of his wife, strolls out at midnight on the bridge that spans the river and as he sees, in the moonlight, the seaweed coming in with the tide and going out again, a flood of tears streams over his face and he cries from the depth of his broken heart:

"How often, oh, how often
Have I wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
O'er the ocean wild and wide."

To each and all

"There comes a time when with earth's best loves
by us

To satisfy the heart's great hunger and desire,
Not even this can satisfy us:

The heart within us calls for something higher."

In heaven that unnamed longing will find its satisfaction. All losses will be recovered, all broken links of affection restored; the child will be given back to her mother, the mother to her child.

One of the saddest moments for an American tourist going to Europe alone is the moment the ship glides into the port on the other side and re-

ceives the salutations of the eager, anxious faces and hands awaiting there. The sadness comes not from the sight of land, for all the tourists are glad for that, nor at the sight of the happy reunions, but from the thought that in all that multitude of waving hands and kerchiefs there is none for him. He is sailing from the charted sea of water into an unknown sea of laughing faces that care as little for him as the foaming billows for the keel.

But the sadness incident to landing on the other side of the Atlantic will not be felt when we land on the tropical shore of heaven. When the ship that carries us up from this little world of ours glides unto the placid harbor of heaven, there'll be some one waiting for us there. I sometimes think the splendor of our western sky is but the mingled radiance of our loved ones' faces looking earthward. The sun, it seems to me, could not throw such glory there.

Oh yes, we are homeward bound; we are not travelling toward a foreign shore, and we have a hope laid up for us in heaven because it is our home.

HOW HE SENDS US

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

John 20:21.

The statues of Buddha represent him sitting, tailor fashion, with hands folded and eyes closed. The pictures of Jesus almost invariably represent him in action. The difference is the difference of the two religions. Buddhism is Memnon, Christianity is the Nile. One sits, the other moves.

Christianity could not be otherwise and be true to its founder, for He said, "I am come that ye might have life," "I go to prepare a place for you," "Come unto Me," "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations." He was the wandering Jew, condemned by the eternal compulsions of love to an undying activity. He could no more rest than the creation which He and the Father made, no more stop than the succession of seed-time and harvest. Even what seemed to be rest was mental preparation for more work, a lacing of the sandals for another journey.

Let us learn our duty by studying our Lord in action. If He sends us as He was sent, we can only understand the meaning of our mission as Christians by trying to grasp the meaning of His.

How did the Father send Jesus?

He sent Him, first of all, with His consent. Milton's conception of God putting the ruin of the race before the heavenly host and telling them that it was necessary for some one to go down and make the sacrifice to ransom the race and of Jesus reverently, amid the silence of the angels, volunteering to go, may not be literally true,— it may not have happened that way, but it is psychologically true.

God sent, Christ consented. Forgetting those two related facts has led to much confusion. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son"; Christ so loved that He laid down his life for his sheep. God's command was Christ's choice.

Charlemagne misunderstanding this essential in Christian service had his whole army driven into the river and baptized *en masse*, thinking to make them Christians forthwith. But if you would have scratched those Christians you would have found a heathen under every epidermis. Where there is no consent there is no discipleship. Christ never coerced any one. He sends us as God sent Him, with our consent or not at all.

How did the Father send Jesus?

He sent him in weakness. Mythology tells us of Hera springing full-grown from the head of Zeus. The ancients may have thought such an origin necessary for prestige, but that is not God's way of doing things. When He wanted the law-giver of the ages He made him little enough

to put in a basket. When He wanted the greatest of all poets He made him small enough to hold in two hands. When He wanted the Redeemer of the world He made a little child, too feeble to lift a hand, too weak to open an eye. The only man He ever made big from the start was Adam and he was a failure. Christ came the weakest of the weak, having emptied himself and made himself poor that we through his poverty might be rich.

So He sends us. If we are not willing to go in weakness He does not want us to go at all, because "when we are weak then are we strong." The person who is so full of himself that there is no room for Christ is as impotent as an uncharged wire. It is only when the current comes from the dynamo and completely possesses every atom of the wire that the little thread shines. The little thread filled with power gives more light than all the cables of the Brooklyn bridge.

Here is where many of us fail. We are unwilling to be sent because we are weak. That is the very reason why we should go, for "his strength is made perfect in weakness." The Lord can't use an egotist. Who was it who swept three thousand souls into the kingdom of God with one sermon, establishing a record that has never been equalled or dangerously approached? It was Peter. And who was Peter? The man who betrayed his Lord, who sank in the sea, who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant; weak in temptation, weak in reserve, weak in discrimination.

It does not matter from what your weakness comes or how utterly weak your weakness may be, Christ wants to use you at once as his ambassador. Are you illiterate? Billy Bray could neither read nor write, yet he shook Wales in a revival as the forest-levelling storm shakes the mountain pines; worse than that, he shook Wales as the earthquake shakes the solid earth, for the Welsh revival was a miner's revival and deep down under the mountains miners fell on their knees and implored God for forgiveness. Are you poor? Penniless Paul did more for the world than all the millionaires of the world.

“ The riches of a commonwealth
Are free, strong minds and hearts of health,
And more to her than gold or grain
The cunning hand and cultured brain.”

Are you infirm? Christmas Evans was blind in one eye, Fanny Crosby blind in both eyes. A Philadelphia saint, bed-ridden for years, conducts a Sunday School by correspondence that encircles the globe. She goes to all nations and preaches the gospel to all peoples though she cannot walk ten feet across the floor.

No, if your life is useless and your page in the Lamb's book of life blank it is because you are unwilling. Weakness is no excuse, for God has always used the weak things to confound the mighty.

How did the Father send Jesus?

He sent him into the world. The meteor comes sizzling down into the earth, a celestial bouquet thrown at the earth by some passing courtier, but Christ came into the world, the world of people. He was born in a stable filled with people; his first breath was from the steamy atmosphere of many breaths. His whole life was spent among people. He wound in and out among them as the stream winds in and out among the fields, refreshing and vitalizing everywhere. He permeates the masses as the sunshine permeates the earth, flooding the saints as sunshine floods the hills and piercing the sinners as sunbeams pierce the dungeon.

There was none of the hermit in Jesus, except that soul-hermitage to which man can withdraw even in the crowd and "eat of that meat which the world knows not of." But as for going and living alone as the early Christians did, there was none of that either in Christ's conduct or his teaching.

You laugh at old Stylites on top of his pillar, and smile indulgently at the old monks who slept on boards, ate gruel and wore coarse garments. But if your religion is confined to the church and consists only in coming to the church you are more useless than they were. They left a heritage of reverence and devotion behind; you will not.

Christ does not want saints in niches. He wants them on highways. When Cromwell came into a cathedral and saw a number of statues in alcoves in the walls, he said to an officer, "What are those things?" The officer replied, "They

are disciples." "Then," said Cromwell, "pull them down and mint them into coins and let them go about doing good as disciples ought to do." Cromwell had his hand on the pulsating heart of Christianity when he spoke those words.

God sent Christ into the world of people, not the good and the cultured, the world of all kinds of people, the good, the bad, the indifferent, the swearing, the adulterous, the deceitful, and the multitude followed him "as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon."

So Christ sends us. He wants us to be as close to people as we are to Him. And we must be to be useful. To make an auto useful its wires must have two perfect contacts. The contact must be perfect at the magneto, where the electric current is made. It must be perfect also at the spark plug, where the current is discharged into the cylinder. A poor contact is as bad at one end as at the other. There are many people who have a good contact with the magneto; at least when you hear them pray you would think so; but they have no contact with the world whatever. Their grip on the throne is good but the other end of the wire is dangling in the air.

That is what lost Africa to the Christian world for almost two thousand years. The church fathers at Alexandria spent their time discussing doctrines and forgot to go out into the highways and hedges, and so Africa became the dark continent. Europe and America would be as dark to-

day if they had received the same treatment. God sent Christ into the world and so He sends you. Go, and do not be content to be little alabaster saints in temple niches. All the sinning and suffering and sorrowing are on the outside.

How did the Father send Jesus?

He sent him alone. "Oh," you say, "the angels attended his birth and the angels attended him in his temptation and in his agony. He also had the company of the disciples." Yes, He had their company and still He was alone. Look at the mother who is gazing silently into the face of her dead child. Do you mean to tell me that she is not alone, because the neighbors are with her? Look at the father as he sits in the court room, behind his son on trial for life. Do you mean to say that he is not alone, because the court room is full of people? Ah, there is ground which no one can tread with us. In our deepest experiences we never come closer together than ships that pass in the night in mid-ocean; messages may fly back and forth between us and we may catch faint glimpses of each other's deck lights, but each goes it alone, ploughing a separate path and churning a separate foam.

Though Christ was a man of the crowds and had his little college of apostles with him most of the time, his oft-repeated "O ye of little faith!" shows what loneliness He felt. We must expect that same loneliness. The world receives not the things of the spirit. Christian wives must expect

dull ears from unchristian husbands; Christians of mature piety must expect dullness from the undeveloped. The price of maturity has always been loneliness.

Who is Edison's comrade, who is Burbank's peer? They have none. Nowhere does loneliness come quicker than in religion.

But Christ was alone also in his utterances. When Hillel or Gamaliel or Shimmei spoke they reminded their hearers of others. When Christ spoke He spoke as man never spoke before. He did it primarily because He was the incarnation of God but He did it also because He expressed himself without any thought or concern for previous or contemporaneous utterances of others.

To ignore all who went before us is to assume that wisdom was born in our generation, which is not true; and to ignore the opinions of our contemporaries is to assume that wisdom is lodged in us, which is just as fallacious; but to try to find for everything we say an endorsement in some previous oracle is slavery as abject as that of Israel in Egypt.

Christ was aware of the prophets; they were his text books as a child; but He used them as the rosebush uses the soil. From the ground up He was himself. So ought you to be. God made no two faces alike, no two hearts, no two experiences. Each has therefore a different story to tell, which unless told by him will never be told. And He expects each to tell his story as naturally as the

rose breathes out its fragrance and the linnet its song. Tell your story, if it be but a single sentence. The Greek herald, who came running over the dusty miles from the battle shouting "Victory!" as he entered the city and falling dead at his countrymen's feet, said more than many an hour's oration. God sent Christ to tell his own story and He gave Him a life so different from all others that it had the charm of the first morning in Eden. He sends us the same way and gives us each a unique and winning story to tell. Will we tell it or leave it forever untold?

How did the Father send Jesus into the world?

He sent Him to suffer. Ah, here's the rub. We are perfectly willing to extol the bleeding sacrifice of Calvary and praise the martyrs who went to the Colosseum, the stake and the gibbet, but when our turn comes to suffer we want ether. There is no Christianity, however, without suffering. Christ said, "For this cause came I into the world" and "As my Father hath sent Me into the world, even so send I you."

The path to every blessing is stained with blood. The lintels and door-posts of every life, whether it be the life of a child or a nation, are streaked with blood. Around an old oak cut down in England some years ago was a circle of skeletons and every head was cut in twain, recalling the days of the battle axe and the spear. They died that England might live. In the National Cemetery at Gettysburg there are a thousand unknown dead,

while scarcely a summer passes without bringing a few bones and a few buttons to light. They died that America might live. History is first written in blood, then in ink. And the richer the blessing the deeper the crimson. With a few stings of the wind the hunter brings you his game but redemption is passed on through crucified hands from the beginning.

Had all been as willing to bear in their body the marks of the Lord as they are to bear on their lips his praises, society would long since have been redeemed from its ancient plagues and the church, adorned as a bride, would be ready for her heavenly spouse. The curse of the church is the unwillingness of her members to suffer. Perfectly respectable business men who would not touch a drop of liquor themselves, through fear of losing a few dollars' worth of trade will do nothing openly against the saloon. Intellectual and cultured ministers who recoil from injustice as they recoil from a raised serpent, through fear of losing their pulpits refuse to condemn the exploitation of the rich capitalists in their pews.

Fie on such religion! When Nathan stood before David and condemned him by parable he added pungency to the parable by saying, "Thou art the man." When Garibaldi was thrown into jail, he exclaimed, "Though fifty Garibaldis be thrown into prison, let Rome be free." When the European war broke out the German clergymen immediately took steps to have the law excluding

them from military service revoked, contending that if all other professions have the honor of fighting for their country they ought to have it too.

Many sing "Onward, Christian Soldiers" who are nothing but dishwashers. Brethren, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon was more than a table knife. It was something that invited death for the holder as well as the foe. Up and to arms, ye who claim to be followers of the Captain of our salvation! You must do good as well as be good and you must bear in your body the marks of the Lord. If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with him. If we follow him afar off and hide behind trees He will deny that He ever knew us.

How did the Father send Jesus into the world?

He sent Him to seek and to save the lost. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." How many have we sought, how many have we found? Oh, it is easy to seek as a child seeks mittens and caps, with a glance here and a glance there and then a skip and away without them. But that is not the way Christ wants us to seek the lost. He wants us to seek until we have found.

When Bennett sent Stanley to find Livingstone, he said to Stanley, "Draw on me for a thousand pounds, and when you have gone through that draw on me for another thousand, and when you have spent that draw another and then another, but find Livingstone." And so he went, through jungle and swamp, through fever and poison, until

he found Livingstone in the heart of Africa. Twenty-three times fever laid him low; forty consecutive miles he walked through water; dangers indescribable he met on every side, but he found his man.

Our commission is like Stanley's. We can draw upon Christ whenever we need him. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "My grace is sufficient for thee." Are we finding our men?

Oh, the tragedy of a childless home! Oh, the double tragedy of a childless religion! Eliza Agnew, the girls' school missionary for forty-one years in Ceylon, was called the mother of a thousand daughters. She will have more to present to the King of all kings than the Roman matron who was asked to show her jewels.

How is it with you, my brother, sister?

When Nadine Boulitchoff, the great Russian singer, completed her engagement in Brazil she announced that she would give a benefit night for the emancipation of slave women. At the conclusion of the last song the audience burst into deafening applause. But that was not the thing that delighted the soul of the great singer. The thing that made her happy was the sight of a dozen slave women pushing their way up to the platform and falling with tear dimmed eyes and clasped hands before her. She had made them free and they were there to praise her.

Oh, how many will there be who will thank us
up yonder for what we have done.

“ Must I go and empty handed,
Must I meet my Saviour so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Must I empty handed go? ”

God forbid!

LITTLE SAMUEL'S COAT

A MOTHER'S DAY SERMON

"His mother made him a little coat."

I Samuel 2:19.

Poetry is the language of love and without it poetry would die, for philosophy, history, science and law are best expressed in prose. The sublimest poetry, therefore, is that which reveals the divinest love, and that which reveals the divinest love is the poetry that will live. It is because of the burning love throbbing through their poems that Burns and Moore and Longfellow and Poe are bound to survive the memory of their contemporaries. While the polished jingles of the passionless rhymsters pass out of sight, like the flickering candle dying in its socket, "Evangeline," with its pitiful tale of parted lovers, "Annabel Lee," with its tender tribute to the dead, "Enoch Arden," with its love that gives up all for the happiness of the loved, will go on their flaming way like planet-circled suns.

But the sublimest poetry on earth is not that which the poets wrote. It is that which mothers sewed into little garments. As the love of woman surpasses that of man, so do the poems of the needle surpass the poems of the pen. There is more

love stitched into the little skirts and coats of children than ever found its way into ancient scrolls or modern books.

The mother to whom our text refers is one of the innumerable household laureates who had a little boy and loved him. Like a faithful Jewish mother, she dedicated him to the Lord and committed him to the service of Eli the prophet. Going once a year with her husband up to Shiloh, where Eli the prophet and the little boy were, she took with her, usually, a little coat which her own hands had made. That coat, however, antedates the assembling of the cloth. When little Samuel lived there were no stores in which to buy one's cloth and thread. Each household made its own. The mother of Samuel was, therefore, hardly back from her annual visit to Shiloh before she began the supervision of the next year's coat. She of course very soon selected the sheep from which the wool was to be taken and kept the shepherds constantly in mind. She doubtless also, when shearing time arrived, washed the wool and bleached it by itself, and when spinning time came she held the distaff and spindle with her own hands. She watched the sheep, she prepared the wool, she made the coat, she took it to him and put it on him, then hugged the coat, the boy and all as only a mother can.

From this little coat, so insignificant beside the pomp of kings and pageantry of empires, yet so much greater than all, because born of a higher

love, we shall draw our sermon. We shall roll that little coat up into a prism and with it analyze the love that shines through it. That little coat tells us more eloquently than a poet's pen could ever hope to tell us, the constituents of a mother's love. It is a matter of comment that a mother's love is the most beautiful thing on earth, but we shall never know its beauty until we see the color bands it throws.

Looking at it on the other side of the coat, where its hidden glory is spread out, we see first of all the broad red band of consecration.

Red is the color of blood and blood is the ink of service. With it soldiers have written history on mountain ledge and valley stream, on prairie grass and desert sands; with it martyrs have written their heroism in Colosseum and city square, explorers their bravery in jungle glades and arctic snows. The records have disappeared from the pages that received them, but the heat of judgment will bring them out as fire restores a hidden message and they will tell the stories of earth's great deeds as historians never told them. Gettysburg and Waterloo and Crecy and Chalon, Bannockburn and Hastings will make the records of the pen seem cold as chiselled steel. And what a tale will Calvary unfold,— that little knoll that holds the price of our redemption.

But red blood is more than the ink of consecration. It is also the wealth of a country. Bankers reckon the value of a country by its silver and

gold, its houses and lands; but the sage of Concord said,

“ One drop of noble manly blood
The surging seas outweigh,”

and a little thought shows the sage to be right. The countries that have blessed the world have been little Palestine in the stony Jordan valley, little Greece in the hilly heel of Europe, little Rome in the narrow plains of Campania, little England in the swirl of two pounding seas. The best part of America's contribution to the world came from little New England, where the gods of old scattered rocks for grain and forgot to reap their harvest.

Blood has always been a nation's best asset, its richest treasure, its highest worth. And the blood of its mothers has been its purest gold. Who has ever forgotten the Spartan mother who told her son to come home with his shield or on it, or the Indian mother who in superstition threw her babe into the sacred, filthy Ganges, or the American mother who bent over her dying boy at Gettysburg and said, “ I yield him to his country and his God.”

It was the red blood of mother Washington that kept her boy from running off to sea, the red blood of mother Lincoln that breathed the fortitude of the rocks and the uprightness of the trees into the soul of her growing boy. It was the true blood of countless thousands of noble moth-

ers that gave us our soldiers, our reformers and our statesmen. And when we say this we are not referring to that vague, airy element that flows merely through one's personality. We talk of actual blood, the kind that throbs and stains and feeds. Drop for drop and pain for pain, motherhood has soldiery outdistanced a thousand leagues.

The soldier of the sword yields his blood under the inspiration of the multitude and the stirring strains of martial music. The soldier of the cradle, like Jacob at Peniel, fights her battles alone. For the soldier of the uniform there is abatement of suffering. Wars are less frequent than they used to be and of shorter duration. But motherhood has the same battles to fight that it always fought and must fight them with the same intensity that it felt three thousand years ago.

How strange that only now, after the long neglect of ages, mothers should be recognized as soldiers and be given a little pension. May the day soon come when all worthy mothers will be amply protected and abundantly provided for by the state. A poverty-stricken mother is a disgrace to the state that has her as well as to the husband who left her.

Next to the red of consecration I see, as I examine a mother's love through this woolen prism of long ago, the orange of warm affection. Orange is suggestive of the tropics. Whether we see it on the fruit or the sign board, the pennant or the book, it takes our thoughts to the place where

the sweet magnolias bloom and where the woods are always gay. It tells us of an atmosphere that clasps the earth with the warmth and ardor of a lover.

Among God's creatures there is none in whom the ardor of affection is so tropically warm as in a mother. The warm blood of her heart sends life into the form of her unborn child, the warm press of her lips sends healing into the wounds of her bruised child, the warm breath of her soul sends thoughts into the mind of her plastic child, the warm beam of her eye sends cheer into the face of her bearded son.

Through childhood and maturity she is the one unfailing sanatorium of all the cold world's bitterest ailments. What she does is neither scientific nor philanthropic, as the records of men are kept, but she reaches suffering that the philanthropist never dreams of and heals diseases that the scientist cannot touch.

We wonder not that John Quincy Adams, at eighty, repeated nightly the little prayer that his mother taught him. It was like running into her arms again and hearing her old sweet lullabies, like gliding in from the storm and the tempest to the placid harbor of a blossoming isle. Nor do we wonder that Gray the poet asked to be buried beside his mother. There is nothing so comforting to a little child as the knowledge that mother's head is near when the sleepy eyes begin to close. It is natural for us to feel that our sleep will be

sweeter also in death if we can pillow our heads on the same pallet of clay.

The flowers always turn toward the sun. They love the warm kiss of their mother. We are like them, and our hearts turn naturally toward the one who poured a whole soul's summer heat of love upon us.

Next to the orange of affection I see, in this mother love spread out before me, the green of immortality. How easy it is for us to think we shall soon be forgotten when we are dead. How certain we feel that our days are rounded in the moil of common things. Pans and plates, socks and jackets, suds and grease, what pledges of immortality! They mock the very effort of the orator who tries to prove it.

But listen! About thrice a thousand years ago there lived a mother whose lot was poorer than that of the poorest of you. She was a slave in the days when slavery was at its worst. Today she has the joint credit of controlling five hundred million people. There are at present over five hundred million people living under governments that have drawn their legal fundamentals from the Bible. Some in these governments are disposed to call the decalogue obsolete and indulge in a condescending smile when some of its homely phrases are repeated, but the fact remains that we essentially approve today what it approves and penalize what it penalized,—if not with the same condemnation, with the same exactness.

The decalogue we call Mosaic, but before Moses was ready for the promptings of the Omniscient he had to take a long course of lessons from the one who bore him. If you want to know the influence that that slave mother had upon the world, look at her son after his graduation from the university of On. Coming back to his foster mother's home, the palace of Pharaoh's daughter, he had before him two careers, one of royal splendor, the other of menial service. He could lead either princes or slaves. Which did he do? "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Softly as the vernal breezes kiss the opening buds, that mother kissed the soul of Moses with high ideals, and when the summer time of manhood came he burst into the splendor of a tropical grove.

Over in England there is a remarkable group of twenty-one colleges, known collectively as Oxford University. From its walls have come such men as Gladstone the statesman, Whitfield the preacher, Wycliffe the reformer, Ruskin the author, Locke the philosopher, John Wesley the founder of Methodism, and his brother Charles the hymnologist. With Cambridge, it leads the universities of the British Empire. During the colonization period it furnished unschooled America with some of its choicest scholars and some of its profoundest divines. We say that Oxford

sprang, a thousand years ago, from Alfred the Great but we trace the stream only a portion of the distance if we stop with Alfred. If you want to push your canoe up to the fountain of that mighty Amazon of learning you must go with me up to the home of Alfred's mother.

One day when Alfred was a boy of twelve, with several brothers older than himself at home, his mother, the queen wife of Ecgbert, bought a little book with highly colored letters and gorgeous pictures and offered it to the boy who would first be able to read it. With a vim characteristic of all his actions, Alfred set about learning to read the book and acquired it as his prize. From that day dated Alfred's love of literature and passion for learning, and to that incentive given him by a thoughtful mother the great university of Oxford owes its existence today. It was only a little book, it was only a little boy, it was only a little act of love that brought the boy and the book together, but it was the mountain lake that started the river.

Oh, if there is a class of people on earth that can say, "We are laborers together with God," it is the class made up of those who mould the plastic clay of personality.

Talmage said that when the two Wesleys approach their throne in heaven they will find one in the middle, higher than either, for their mother. But the mother of the Wesleys is not the only mother who will share an equal or superior reward

with her children. From the four points of the compass and from all the centuries there will be mothers of whom the world has never heard, coming up to glory, for crowns as resplendent as those of earth's most famous queens. By the side of Victoria, coming from the sacred halls of Westminster, will be Margaret, the mother of Luther, coming from the sacred dust of Mansfeld; Monica, the mother of Augustine, coming up from Milan; Betsey, the mother of Moody, coming from Northfield, and others whose sons were only good but not illustrious.

You must not be impatient, mother; you must not be discouraged. If your work is slow in maturing, so much grander is your work. The cathedral of Cologne, begun in 1248, was not finished until 1880. For a century at a time it was neglected; generations came and went without seeing one stone laid upon another; often it deteriorated, but at last, in our own day, the cap-stone was placed upon it and the dream of the old architect, who died two hundred years before Columbus, was realized. You may close your eyes as the unknown architect, with your dream no more fulfilled than his was, but rest assured that some day in the sweet bye-and-bye it will be fulfilled. Though your boy fell in the morning of manhood and left you nothing but an aching heart, he left also an impress on half a hundred friends that in God's good time will bless the race. The one he saved may not become a potent factor and the one

who is saved by the one he saved may go to an unremembered grave, but some time in the next five centuries or more the spires of Cologne will rise and your work on the little coat will have its reward.

The next color that the prism shows, after the green, is the blue, which stands for constancy. "As true as the blue" has long been a mosaic. I see that band also as I look through little Samuel's coat.

No sin is great enough to quench the love of a mother. Though fathers go to the same length and depth to rescue or forgive a recreant son, there are, nevertheless, frequent instances in which a father's love, at least for a while, is exhausted. Having done all that a father could be expected to do and more than a son has a right to ask, having poured money upon him like water, and receiving only ingratitude in return, he grits his teeth and turns his back. His attitude thereafter, save in such rare moments when the heart strings of sentiment are touched by some chance reference to the boy's innocent childhood, is that of a merchant to an agent. Love practically enters the relation no more. But with a mother it is different. Her heart is a fountain that never runs dry.

When William Penn renounced the religion of his fathers, all his former friends save one forsook him, his old companions mocked him, the priests denounced him, his father in anger turned

him penniless out of doors, but his mother remained and kept him from starving.

Sir Walter Scott had a brother Dan, who taxed his mother's constancy more than William Penn. He was the black sheep of the flock, who ruined himself financially and morally through the acquaintance of a dissolute woman. So great was the dishonor that he brought upon the family name that Sir Walter neither attended his funeral nor wore mourning for him, and when he spoke of him he referred to him as a relative and not a brother. But the mother of the boys was not so. No mother ever was.

Her arms, like the branch of the generous oak, are open for the recreant as well as the upright. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" is as true of her as of the One who uttered it on the green hills of Galilee, and there are thousands of mothers proving it every day by their ceaseless tread to the courthouse and the jail. What tests has a mother's love not been put to! Never has it failed. It seems as fathomless as the sea, as immeasurable as the heavens. No matter what disease or sin may do with her children, a mother's love is a mother's love still, the holiest thing alive. No matter what sin or disease may do with the mother herself, her mother love will not forsake her.

Some time ago a woman went suddenly insane in New York city and was carried by her mania,

like a beggar, through the streets. Her family, in spite of their shrewdest cunning, could neither induce her to stay at home nor enter an asylum. Finally after all other methods failed, one of them hired a messenger boy to intercept her with a telegram, informing her that her child was dangerously ill at a hospital and that if she wished to see her child alive she should come at once. The ruse worked like a charm, and the woman who a moment before was walking the streets with reason dethroned was on her way to her own imprisonment. When old King Lear was met out in the storm-lashed forest, with hair dishevelled and garments drenched, and asked whether he was the king, he answered, "Aye, every inch a king!" As we see this poor, wild-eyed creature hastening along with her mother love aglow for her child, we feel like answering, for her, to the world that imprisoned her, "Aye, every inch a queen!" A creature whose love can flame up through the smouldering ashes of an exhausted mind is queenly indeed, "majestic though in ruins."

But such is the stuff of which a mother's heart is made. When the Capitol at Washington was finished, they took the stones that were left and built a bridge across a creek between Washington and Georgetown. If there was any material left after the great white throne was made, it must have been put into motherhood, that bridge across life's turgid youth.

After the blue in the prism's glory is the indigo.

How suggestive indeed is the indigo band through this woolen prism of long ago. We have seen many bottles since we left the old back porch of our boyhood days, some of them dangling from the necks of qualmish women, some peeping from the pockets of sinful men, others nestling beside the pillowed heads of sleeping babes, but of all the bottles, plain or fancy, that our eyes have ever seen there is none that brings back such memories as the one that mother used for blueing. We thought little of it as her tired form bent over the tub while she stirred the waters with her hand. The playful hand of a fair young girl leaning over the boat was more attractive then. But how different is it now as we walk with tender step the twilight path of memory!

The indigo band tells me of a mother's slavery. In ancient times slaves for life were branded or marked in the lobe of the ear with an awl. It sometimes happened that slaves who were in bondage for only a certain term of years fell in love with some who were slaves for life and, to become their mates, submitted their ears to the master's awl.

Oh, how many thousands of mothers bear the marks of such voluntary servitude! You see it in the wrinkles of their forehead, in the tremble of their fingers, in the tell-tale hand that unconsciously seeks to soothe a rheumatic arm. The hardest worked slave of the most brutal tyrant had his period of rest and his hours of sleep; the

mother has no minute of time that she can count upon as her own. Day and night, winter and summer, hungry mouths and busy hands make unceasing demands upon her.

In the servitude of man the sacredness of the body is respected. No drop of blood is drawn, no hair singed, no bone broken, and everything possible is done for the safety of those who serve. But the servitude of a mother's love holds nothing sacred except the thing adored. She cares no more for smallpox, if her child is stricken, than she does for measles. She lays her body, a living sacrifice, upon the altar and fears nothing. When pressed by poverty she gives everything she has to save her children. A mother recently walked into a hair dresser's store in Pittsburg and offered her wealth of hair for fifty dollars. Her brood was crying for bread and she was desperate. The hole in the ear was nothing compared to the stiffened joints, the rattling lungs, the burning feet and the host of other physical ills that slaving mothers willingly endure.

When the excavators unearthed Pompeii they came upon many strange, suggestive sights. The guard who stood unflinchingly at his master's door is classic; the miser who ran back for his bag of gold and was found with it in his hand is also known; but of all the suggestive sights unearthed there is none that breathes such tender consecration as that which the diggers saw when they came upon the form of a little cripple boy sitting by a

window. Around the neck of the boy was the arm of a woman. The body of the woman was gone; it was consumed with the general devastation; but the arm that reached through the window was still around her boy, though almost two thousand years had passed away. What that mother did every mother would do.

Young man, when you are tempted to throw your life away for a syren's song, remember the vigils your fretting occasioned, the aching arms your tyranny made, the tired back on which you had no mercy. Your life is the result of over a thousand forgotten anxieties and over a thousand prayers. It was dearly bought and fully paid. Remember her who paid the greater portion of the price. If a thing is to be disposed of according to the price at which it was bought, you ought to dispose of your days and strength as a jeweler disposes of his gems. No greater service than your mother rendered you will you ever have, none who will go down into the depths and out into the lengths of service as she has. Think well as you look at the indigo band of your mother's loving service.

Beyond the indigo in the prism's variegated glory lies the purple, tender and subdued. I see it also as I examine a mother's love through little Samuel's coat. The purple tells me of that silent love that sits and gazes at empty cribs and winsome faces on the wall; the love that kisses little dishes and drops a tear or two on little orphaned

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dolls. It tells me of that love that looks toward the sunset and sees radiant faces behind it; the love that travels often to the gates ajar and waves to the one within them.

Eugene Field in one of his tender moods describes such a love in language no poet has ever surpassed.

“ After dear old grandma died,
Hunting through an oaken chest
In an attic we espied
What repaid our childish quest:
’Twas a homely little slate
Seemingly of ancient date.

“ On its quaint and battered face
Was the picture of a cart
Drawn with all that awkward grace
Which betokens childish art;
But what meant this legend, pray:
‘ Homer wrote this yesterday? ’

“ Mother recollected then
What the years were fain to hide —
Mother was a baby then,
When little Homer lived and died;
Forty years, so mother said,
Little Homer had been dead.

“ This little slate through all the years
Grandma kept from all apart,
Hallowed by her lonely tears
And the breaking of her heart;

While each year that sped away
Seemed to her but yesterday."

Forty years of separation leave a mother's love as verdant and as fragrant as the passing of a night and she still thinks of the little slate, the little shoes, the toys and trinkets, stowed away in bureau drawers and closet shelves, as things of yesterday. She hears the cooing of her babe and sees the sparkle of his eye, and ofttimes in her reverie draws him to her breast and sings again her lullabies, though twice a score of years have passed since she gave him back to God.

What Homer's mother did every mother does. No matter how the passing years may fill her life with new associations, she always holds, deep down in the shady nooks of her heart, the fragrant violets of remembrance. There are mothers in every city, hamlet and town who are going as regularly to their little mounds as they did twenty years ago. No altars in all the world are approached as frequently and as tenderly as those that rest upon the little forms of long ago. No matter who forgets us when we are gone, mother will not. Such a love as this is worth revering. It deserves more than respect. It is worthy of the veneration accorded the saints.

Friend, if you still have a mother on earth, do everything for her that you can. If you are a boy or a girl at home, lighten her burden and smooth her pathway. Shoulders that have borne your

weight through the restless years of childhood deserve a rest from many of the slavish tasks that once were necessary. If your mother is one of the innumerable throng that makes more music in the kitchen than the parlor and habitually crowds the servant and the mistress in one gown, then despise yourself with all your heart if you still allow her to carry coal and do the chores she did of yore.

That boy who lets his mother drag and drudge while he parades the dude isn't worth the heat it took to crease his trousers. That girl who lets her mother broil and burn while she enjoys the breezes on the porch isn't worth one puff of the powder on her face.

If you are a boy or girl grown large and have left the old homestead, remember that your mother is your mother still and that no matter what the world may call you or what honors it may pour at your feet, to her you are still her child. Give her reason to find an increasing pleasure in that feeling. It is her deepest and her richest joy.

Write to her often. Clem Studebaker, the millionaire wagon manufacturer, called on his mother every morning when at home and sent her a daily telegram when away. It mattered not how far east or west he was, his mother always had a good morning from her boy.

Remember her birthdays. She baked many a birthday cake for you and put more in it than the sugar and eggs that made them light. Treat

her with the greatest consideration you can command. When Garfield was sworn into office he turned to his mother and kissed her. Never was Garfield greater. Speak of her always with respect. Byron said, "My mother was my worst enemy. She was an ignorant, foolish woman, disagreeable in her appearance and violent in her temper." Byron dropped into the grave at thirty-six; saying,

"My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flower and fruit of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone."

A fitting exit for a man who tramples his mother's name in the mire.

Luther, who had as severe a mother as Byron and who was once flogged until the blood came for no greater offence than that of stealing a nut, said, "She often overstepped the bounds of moderation but she meant it well." Luther's swan song was, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,"—the swan song of Calvary.

If your mother is gone and has taken her place in the sacred throng that is over the river, looking this way, honor her memory with the holiest reverence. When Goethe visited Frankfurt he sought out all who had been kind to his mother and personally thanked them. When Thaddeus Stevens made his will he set aside a thousand dollars for the care of his mother's grave.

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The veneration of sacred dust is a poor substitute for tenderness to living love, but if that is all that is left to you render it as priests burn incense at the altar. The holiest place on earth for you is the place that holds her precious form. Visit it often, go at twilight when the feverish haste of the day is past and the skies are tender and the birds at rest. It will lift you from your weakness and your sin and fill your soul with the ozone of the heavenly hills.

DUNGEONS IN THE AIR

"Why do the people imagine a vain thing?"

Psalm 2:1.

The world is full of dungeons on the ground. Scotland has her Dumbarton, where the doughty Wallace was kept in chains; England has her Tower, where Anne Boleyn and Sir Walter Raleigh were beheaded; France has her Bastille, where authors, priests and scholars were held so long in bondage that no man knew who they were or when they came; Spain has her Seville, where dissenters were held in bondage previous to their burning; Switzerland has her Chillon, where the noble Bonivard spent six years chained to a pillar; Venice has her Bridge of Sighs; India, her Black Hole; America, her Leavenworth, her Sing Sing and her Tombs. The face of the earth is pitted over with the smallpox of man's crime.

On hills and in valleys, by sea coasts and by deserts, in city and forest, can be found dungeons used in the past or used today, some of them very young, some of them holding the secret groans of a thousand years. These things must needs be for the protection of society and the punishment and possible reformation of the criminal.

There are, however, some dungeons that never

touched the earth. No mine was ever asked for iron, no quarry ever sought for stone with which to build them. No sentinels ever paced the corridors, no guards ever watched their walls, no state ever paid for their support, no officer ever took a single criminal there,—yet their cells are always full.

The population of these dungeons of the air, like the population of the dungeons on the ground, is very representative. There are educated there and ignorant, rich and poor, white and black, religious and irreligious. Like the population of other dungeons, it has also one common fault: the inmates of the stone dungeons are all there because they did wrong, the inmates of the air dungeons suffer because they thought wrong. They imagined a vain thing and that is why they are there.

Let me act as warden and take you through a corridor of one of these dungeons of the air. Though there are no iron bars and though the inmates may look sulky, I assure you that no harm will come to you from any, for they gnaw and claw no one but themselves.

The first cell to the right is occupied by a man who has been there many years. He is in for imagining that the world is full of cheats. He declares that all men are liars in a crisis and most of them thieves at heart. He was deceived several times in his earlier years; a trusted employee tapped his safe and a business associate dragged

him hip-deep into debt. See the pinched lips, the drawn eyelids, the frowning brow. He seldom changes his position or his looks. Many who pass his cell remark after passing that he reminds them of a lion at bay. His eye is both a warning and a weapon.

The next cell and, in fact, the next five cells are occupied by young men who have lost faith in the opposite sex. The women's ward is full of such inmates. One of these young men, the one in the third cell, says he wouldn't believe a woman's word again if she took an oath on a stack of Bibles a mile high. He was disappointed by his fiancée only a week before the day appointed for their wedding, and with that disappointment went all the confidence and all the tenderness he ever had for woman kind. Other youths have occupied the cell he now possesses and in a little while went out into the affairs of the world again, and he may too; but you can see from the way in which he looks upon the photo on the table that he is in the grip of a terrible despair. You need not speak in a whisper for he hears not what we say nor knows that we are here.

The cell beyond this row of five disappointed Romeos is occupied by two men who believe that the world is growing worse. They spend much of the day and part of the night comparing the vices of the present with the virtues of the past. The hospitals, they claim, are proof positive that people are growing weaker. Often have I heard them

say that no one ever heard of appendicitis when they were boys or any of the other half a hundred ills for which men now are drugged and cut. The streets are proof positive, they say, that children are no more reared as they used to be. When they were boys, they say, they used the streets for travel and spent the nights at home; now the children use them for base-ball, profanity and insult and prowl about in them half the night. Nothing stirs them with such indignation as the manner in which the country is run by politicians today. When they were boys officials served their country, now they serve themselves. "The idea," they say, as they hammer their canes upon the floor, "of a President asking twenty-five thousand dollars a year for travelling expenses and of Congressmen spending thousands of dollars for an election!" The only time they smile is when they recall the good old times when a man would rather be right than President. They imagine that the old was all good and the new all bad in politics.

The next few cells are occupied by people who imagine that they have fatal diseases. The women's ward is also full of such inmates. Every time one of them gormandized and his heart fluttered a little he knew that he had another attack of heart trouble and began to cultivate a funeral face. One of them came from tubercular parents and every time he contracted a cold he was sure that consumption was beginning to gallop him to the grave. Another had a fall and imagined that

his nerves were shattered beyond repair. His window is stacked with empty bottles and his pockets full of pills and pellets. Had he a diploma he could open a modest apothecary shop. The conversation of these people is limited almost entirely to pains and aches. They enjoy feeling sick.

Next to these cells are a few occupied by men who took themselves too seriously. One of them is a man of liberal education and is constantly repeating the words of melancholy Hamlet:

“The times are out of joint; oh wretched spite,
That I was born to set them right.”

Another spends his time writing theories of government and planning new methods of business.

They have retired Atlas on half pay and have assumed his entire burden. Of that sweet rest that comes to a man who fills a day with a day's toil and then goes home to dandle his children on his knees at eventide, leaving the big world with its rush and roar outside, they know nothing. Their heart is under every capitol; the quiver of every factory is in their nerves. When they spoke in earlier years they felt sure that they had fired the shot that was heard round the world. Discovering that their fellows by their side hardly heard a whistling they fell into a dismal cynicism that landed them here.

Beyond these cells are some occupied by men who have lost faith in an over-ruling providence.

These are the darkest cells of all. They were not always thus. There was a time when in the sweet innocence of childhood they folded their dimpled hands in prayer as sweetly as angels before the throne, when their youthful lips sang songs as sweet and pure and full of faith as that which floats in mellowing cadence over the hills of Paradise. But passing years took treasures from them; the good died young as well as the bad; railroad accidents killed the righteous as well as the unrighteous; lightning smote irrespective of faith; godly parents were cursed with ungodly children; right was often strangled and wrong was often crowned. They have not forgotten the sweet faith of their childhood in the providence of God but they recall it as they recall the stories of wonderland, with a secret wish that they were children again and possessed of a simple child-like faith. The men who occupy these cells are steeped in a gloom within that is deeper than the gloom without and are of all the people in these dungeons in the air the most pitiable.

We are now at the end of the corridor. Let me take you back to our starting point and show you the door.

You ask me why all these people are here and why these dungeons of the air exist. Look at the inscription above the door. "The Dungeon of Vain Imagination." You ask, "Why do the people imagine a vain thing?" I answer, for a number of reasons which it is useless for us to mention


or guess at. When prisoners are in dungeons of stone and iron we waste no time in dissecting their crimes and analyzing their motives; the time for that is past. Instead of asking how they got there, we ask how we can get them out. For that their friends work, for that their attorneys plead.

That is our motive today. We surmise that some of you may be occupying a cell in one of these dungeons of the air this very moment, and have not the least doubt that you all were prisoners in one of them sometime in your life. As the imprisonment is entirely voluntary the liberation must also be voluntary, and so I am going to appeal to you to liberate yourself from your incarceration.

Whether you are an old man or a new man, in for many years or only for a few weeks, in the first cell or the last, the door is open and the only thing that lies between you and a free happy life of sunshine and joy is your own will. Why should you condemn all men because a few deceived and betrayed you? You do not treat your house thus. If there is a defect or two in one of its parts you hire a carpenter or painter to come and remove or cover it. You want to forget the ugly and see only the beautiful and the good. If your watch betrays you, you don't sell it to the junk dealer or trade it for a sun dial; you take it to the jeweller and ask him to repair it. You want to forget the ugly and see only the beautiful and the good. If a train ditches you, you don't denounce the rail-

roads and yoke an ox; you take the first train that is made up and go more confidently on your way than you did before. The company immediately clears the track, removes the cars and puts perfect ones in their place. It wants the people to forget the ugly and see only the beautiful and the good. Why should we treat God's divinest handiwork as we would not think of treating wood or stone? Though there be rogues and libertines among the sons of men, not all are fallen. One Judas made it dark for Christ, but the eleven remained and the weakest became the mightiest. One Arnold made it dark for Washington, but Lafayette and Green and Wayne and Marion remained and worked all the harder because one turned traitor.

Come out of your dungeon of skepticism. All men are not liars, even if David did say so once upon a time. He said it in his haste, and if he had taken time to think he wouldn't have said it at all. Neither are all men cheats. Many are accused of things they never dreamed of doing. For seventy-five summers a story was told, in the harvest field of a Pennsylvania farmer, of the disappearance of a sickle that was hung on a tree while a father flogged his boy. This spring the man who received the flogging seventy-five years ago struck something hard as he was drawing a cross-cut saw across the trunk of an ancient tree. It was the old sickle. The father in his patriarchal anger forgot where he put it and nature,



to remind the boy in his latter years of the good old days of birch and bacon, buried it in the bark. For many years suspicion rested upon the men who were near the scene; yet they were as innocent as sleeping babes. Many of our suspicions are the rankest embezzlements. Depend upon it, you sullen old cynic, that no one is wholly depraved, few as bad as they are supposed to be, and many accused who are entirely innocent.

“ Then at the balance let’s be mute;
 We never can adjust it;
 What’s done we partly can compute,
 But know not what’s resisted.


“ One point must still be greatly dark,
 The moving why they do it;
 And just as lamely can ye mark,
 How far, perhaps, they rue it.”

Quit imagining such a monstrous fallacy as the depravity of the whole human race. Think of the goodness of bad men rather than the badness of good men. Set your ear to the robin, turn your eyes to the stars. Let the cranes hunt snails and the frogs croak. God made you for better things.

And you who are moping in the cells of disgruntled reminiscence, what are you doing there? The world isn’t worse than it was when you were boys. The hospitals are not proof positive that we are weaker than we used to be; they prove that we take better care of each other than we used to.

Instead of committing our loved ones tearfully to the hands of a mysterious providence we commit them to the hands of a surgeon who knows just where to cut and what to remove. People live longer and grow taller than they did fifty years ago. The wives and daughters of our day couldn't begin to get into the dresses worn by the women who attended the inauguration of Washington a century and a quarter ago. Our health is better, our faces fairer, our lives safer than they ever were in the history of the world. It is said that over half the faces that looked up at Washington as he took the oath of office were pitted over with the marks of smallpox, and his was too. Today you can travel across the continent without seeing one.

The newspapers are not proof that crime is on a rampage and vice increasing every year. There were as many stars before the telescope was made as there have been since the time of its invention. It only brought more within the range of our vision. The newspaper is simply a telescope. Seventy-five years ago half the crimes were undetected, now they are shouted on the streets of cities on the other side of the world only a few moments after they occur. When Mayor Gaynor was shot on board a ship in New York harbor I was reading a morning paper in Newark, across the river. Hardly had I finished it before a newsboy came along shouting, "Extra; Mayor Gaynor shot!" I read it; it had only a general ac-



count of the attempted assassination. In a few minutes I was across the Hudson on the New York side of the river, when another "newsy" came along shouting, "Special extra, all about the mayor!" I bought again and learned how the mayor's pulse was beating, what the doctors had to say and what his chances for recovery were. Within three hours I had three papers which kept me better posted on the events of the day than I would have been had I been as tall as the statue of Liberty and occupied the same point of vantage.

But the quickness with which crime is detected and reported is no indication of its increase. It is only proof of the impossibility of keeping it secret and that in itself is a powerful deterrent. The world is growing better. It is better today than it ever was before and it's going to be better tomorrow. So come out of your cell, turn your face toward the sun and be a man.

The exposures of political corruption in our country and others is no proof that politicians are worse today than they were before. If you leave the rosy recollections of your hazy memory a while and go up to the attic and unearth a few old papers that your father laid away in the days of Jackson or Clay or Grant you will find that your demigods were very human, their heads as cunning, their fingers as long and their ways as crafty and vindictive as the worst today. Lifting the record of many an old political campaign is like lifting a moss-grown log from its wormy bed.

106 RELIGIOUS RHEUMATISM

Prying into the details of many an ancient administration is like prying into a long unopened cellar.

Think not, Sir Knight of the Frowning Brow, that public plunderers were only born in these latter years. The progeny of Achan is very ancient. Uncle Sam was robbed as persistently fifty years ago as he has been in recent years. The only difference between the two eras is that then he went along with his sack on his back without knowing that the boys had ripped it, while now he turns around and flogs them for it. But the corn was dropping all the time.

The trouble with you men is that you have lost your nerve of appreciation. You are like the wise old grandfathers who shake their heads and rue the fact that the pippins and the baldwins are not as good as they were when they were boys. The fact is that they have lost over half their nerves of taste and simply can't enjoy them as they used to. In a boy the nerves of taste cover not only the top and the bottom of the tongue but also the sides of the mouth. Every square inch of his mouth is full of hungry nerves, and when a pippin or a baldwin makes its luckless way into his mammoth cave they pounce upon it like a clan of cannibals. The brain gets a report of the feast from every nerve that helped to enjoy it. Naturally the total impression is jubilant. But poor grandfather has only a few nerves of taste left on his coated tongue and they, like his teeth, are



worn and ragged. The apples have not changed, he has.

Oh, come out of your dismal cell and bask yourself in the sunshine of the best civilization and the happiest era the world has ever seen. God intended you to look forward, else He would have put your eyes in the back of your head. Don't pour your tears down your spine. If you have any to shed, shed them where they will roll over your heart and moisten your sympathies.

"Keep out of the Past. It is lonely,
And barren and bleak to the view;
Its fires have grown cold, and its stories are old —
Turn, turn to the Present — the New;
Today leads you up to the hilltops
That are kissed by the radiant sun,
Today shows no tomb, life's hopes are in bloom,
And today holds the prize to be won."

And you who are in the cells of disease, why do you imagine such a vain thing? No disease is fatal until it has killed you, and you're not dead yet. There isn't a disease known among men that is absolutely and invariably fatal. Men call the white plague fatal but it is only fatal to those who run. When I left home for college I told a few friends that I would probably be back before Christmas to attend a funeral. I had a consumptive cousin in mind. Sixteen years he lived thereafter, seeing "men of pith and might and valor" pass before him to the tomb. Another, about the

same time, was allowed a few months by the physicians who knew him. He clung to fences as a drowning man clings to a board and coughed most piteously every time he ventured upon a little walk. Three of the physicians who gave him up have already passed on to await his arrival. But the probabilities are that they will see a considerable number of arrivals before he makes his; for he sits as quietly through an hour's service as any one in the house of God. Not a cough, not a flutter passes his lips. He is healed of his infirmity and cured of his disease. The founder of the first sanatorium in the Adirondacks was carried there on a cot to die, but he too decided to stay and stayed long enough to build up one of the most beneficent institutions on our northern hills.

If men have achieved such glorious victories from man's most persistent foe, why should you fall back in the tent of despair at the sight of weaker ones? You must not suppose that because your parents died of a certain disease you are fore-doomed to die of it also. Modern science has abandoned that idea entirely. Environment has sent more people to the grave than heredity has, and neglect more than both. Like produces like, but from birth the resources of the universe await the bidding of each new creature. Use them and be strong. The trouble with you wheezing, sneezing, plastered saints is that you are living too near the brink of Jordan. Every time a quack comes along with a mixture of bran, lard and perfume,


guaranteed to cure any one of a dozen supposedly incurable ills, he convinces you that you have about half of them and sells you a few boxes of his mixtures, leaving you in a few weeks with the conviction that your continued side stitches and pains are heaven's kind premonitions of your approaching funeral. Let your pulse take care of itself; it did it nobly before you knew that you had it. Leave the selection of your shroud and the arrangements of your funeral to your relatives. Hunt the woods, climb the rocks, jump the streams, throw your voice against the hills, live in God's country, and the wild harangue of the quack will soon sound as foolish to you as the gibbering of a parrot. Anteus the wrestler could never be thrown until his opponent lifted him from the ground. As long as he touched the earth he was invincible. So are we against disease. In contact with nature and in harmony with her laws, we can resist any disease that man has ever known. Out of touch with nature, we are the helpless victims of almost anything that comes along.

Health and disease are largely matters of temperament. The one who mentally scratches around in his stomach for albumen and acids as an old hen digs the barnyard for corn and sand is sure to have a very disordered stomach. How could it be otherwise? The person who daily patrols his nervous system and puts an extra force on at night, with orders to report every new sensation and keep it under surveillance, can hardly

expect to enjoy good health, for good health and peace are inseparable conditions. Military law is as detrimental to the free intercourse of the body as it is to the traffic of the town.

Abandon your superstitions, throw your aches and ailments away. God doesn't want you to grunt, else He would have given you a deeper voice, and bristles. Be cheerful and glad, no matter how many odds are against you. The millions that try to overthrow you as they come upon you on the avenues of the wind and the highways of food and drink are nothing compared to the hosts that come riding down the boulevard of sunshine. "They that be for us are more than they that be against us."

And now, brother Job, we will take you by the arm,—oh, excuse me, I forgot about that boil. You're sore and bleeding, bruised at heart and shattered in fortune; life is a tangled skein, a jungle in which roots and snakes are indistinguishable and you hardly know which way to tread. You are not to be trifled with or lightly answered, you say, for you have sat too long in the silences of mystery. Brother, I would rather pelt an angel than treat your troubled soul irreverently. The man who has lost his hold on God is of all men the most in need of thoughtful aid. Your losses, you say, have confused and stunned you and sent you reeling to the earth; the soul that once went up on wings of song to the throne of God has fallen like an eagle shot in flight and only flutters now



among the hedges, sickened, frightened, limp and dizzy.

Well, let us admit all that you say, brother, and take it for granted that your sorrow has not led you to magnify your troubles; let us also assume that your troubles are not the fruit of your own neglect or folly; also that, as far as human standards go, your life deserved a better turn. Let us assume everything that you say and think about your life is true.

What then? Is God still in the scheme of things or has the stage coach lost its driver? You say we are running on gravity and the pleasant slopes are only the precursors of the bumps and jolts which will ultimately snap the axles and crush the wheels.

But wait a minute, brother. How old are you? "Forty-five," you say. Forty-five is a rather scant acquaintance with a universe that has been doing business at the same stand for at least ten thousand and perhaps ten million years. If you wanted to know the value of a power plant you wouldn't take the verdict of a man who ran through it in the dark. You would want to speak with the man who built and operated it, the men who lived there. Forty-five years is too short a time in which to judge the providence of God; it can't be studied on a run. "When God walks the earth his steps are often centuries apart," and you will never know where He is going or what He is about until you throw your little life into the

life of the race and go with him as the mountain-minded, hoary-headed man who breakfasted in Eden and hopes to sup in Paradise.

And, brother, what is the size of that hat you wear? "Seven and a quarter." That tells me whence your struggles. A wearer of a smaller hat knows not what a mental struggle is. Doubts never knocked at his door, neither great hopes. Thank God for the dome He placed upon you. If it has the power to cast great shadows, it has also the power to reflect much of the glory of God.

"There is more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, sir, than half your creeds."

But, brother, what would you think of a God who wore a seven and a quarter hat? Do you think a head of that size could take care of the rivers and the seas, the winds and the rains, the seasons and the stars? An ant pushing its way through the hedges of the forest might as well pass judgment on the movements of the explorer, as little man pass judgment on the actions of Him who holds the sea in the hollow of his hand. You will be confused as long as you set your little self against the great God.

But you say, like Job, "Physicians of no value." The Bible is very careful to tell us that God is personally interested in every one of us. It says, "I remember thee," "I will never leave thee," "There shall no evil befall thee." The promises of personal care drop upon us numer-


ously from the Bible as roses from the latticed ceiling of Cæsar's dining room upon the guests. Are they dropped only to charm us into forgetfulness? No, they fall upon us to keep us in mind of the fragrant love behind them. Every promise of personal care is bona fide, as thousands upon thousands in heaven and earth can testify. You cannot understand it, because you are too near the tragedy. You are like the patient just come from the operating table. The hurt of the wound crowds out the thought of the cure. You are like the orchestra boy behind the drums, too near the thunder to hear the music. Distance is necessary to appreciate almost everything. Be satisfied to wait and you will find the ways of God in your poor smitten life so dazzling with glory that you will have to shade your eyes in beholding them.

Back in the bygone æons of unremembered time a troupe of sunbeams came merrily down the sky. Mercury and Venus sang with syren voice as they passed by and did their utmost to draw them thither, but the great Father of light had told them not to stop until they reached the third planet in their journey. Finding the planets they passed so cheerful and gay, they fancied among themselves that their life on earth would be one glad, free and unending song. But poor little mites, when they drew near their inherent force sent them with such speed down upon the earth that they lost themselves in the tangled

shadows of the Carboniferous age. In vain they tried to untangle themselves and travel the air again. They had reached the destination to which they were sent and for further journey had no power. So, weeping and lamenting, they pined their lives away as one by one the leaves and brambles fell upon them. Their lives they thought were failures, their end ignoble; but to-day those buried sunbeams shine with a permanent glory in the crown of a king. Are not diamonds resurrected sunbeams?

Be not discouraged with your life or the providence of God. It requires centuries sometimes for God to reap his harvest. You may be better for some chance word that Columbus spoke to his guards as he lay in chains in Spain. Some one may be helped along life's pathway a century from now by the sorrow that you bear today. When Lisbon was shaken by an earthquake Lake Mjosen up in Norway rose twenty feet. When Christ was shaken with the agonies of death the earth was lifted into sight of heaven.

Do not despise your sorrows. They come to bless you and the world. One day the custodian of Kennelworth castle admitted a stranger at the door. He had a Scotch accent and limped slightly and the custodian paid little attention to him. When he left the custodian idly glanced at the registry on the table. You can imagine his surprise when he saw the name of Sir Walter Scott. He had come to immortalize the castle. Your



sorrows come to immortalize you. Do not despise them because they are without form or comeliness.

We ought to pass through our sorrows as the people of Moscow pass through the Redeemer Gate of their ancient wall. Above it is the picture of Christ. King and peasant pass through with head uncovered. Thus Paul passed through his sorrows when he said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us," and thus he went to glory.

O ye who have lost your hold on God, whether in kingly palace or mountain hut, "lift your eyes unto the hills whence cometh our strength"; if you cannot see and understand, trust and be at peace. "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." The tunnels lead to the mountains and the mountains lead to God.

THE HOPELESS QUEST

"Canst thou by searching find out God?"

Job 11:7.

From the time that the first man went to see what was on the other side of the nearest tree until the present moment man has been an inveterate explorer. At first he merely explored the forest in which he lived and satisfied his curiosity by tracking birds to their nest and beasts to their lair. By-and-bye he became curious to know where the rivers came from. That quest led him to the mountains, where were gulches and caves and peaks. The latter gave him a vision of another world on the other side of the ridge that fenced him in. Shortly he was exploring that, crossing its lakes and inland seas. Later in history he crossed the oceans, reached the poles, climbed the fleecy mountains of the sky.

Side by side with the explorations on the top of things went the explorations into things. The astrologers held converse with the stars, the alchemists bent their ears to the secrets of the metals, the physicists cross-examined the pendulum, the tuning fork and the lens.

But older and more persistent than these jaunts in quest of things material has been man's

age-old quest after the One who made and governs all. Geographical explorations have been the fads of certain centuries, as have the astrological and the alchemical and the mechanical, but the exploration after God has been the unfailing occupation of man from the time when he first looked up and realized that there was a power not his own in the world in which he lived.

The attempts to find out God have made one of the most fascinating chapters, as well as one of the most pathetic, in human history. They are as full of daring as the journeys of Columbus and Pizarro, as sublime in their devotion as the plunges of Livingstone and Stanley, as tearful in their pathos as the stories of Franklin and Scott.

But man never let the dangers of investigation smother his love for truth, nor the difficulty of the task dismay him. Insurmountability has always challenged him. Though history insisted that the poles would never be reached, man persisted in trying to reach them. Though experience insisted that God is beyond the grasp of man, man has always tried to comprehend Him.

Our text gives us a full-length picture of a man in that employment. He is in trouble, the garment in which man travels farthest toward the Infinite;—his wealth is gone, his health is gone, his children are gone, and worst of all, his grip upon himself is gone. He had been an upright man, an honest man, a helpful man, a father to the fatherless, a support to the widows, a friend to

all. Why should he be paid in such coin for that which was so noble and divine?

He cannot understand it. It seems like mockery, a horrible nightmare, a drunken orgie. The beautiful scheme of things that seemed so orderly when the cattle on a thousand hills were his has the wild, demonic confusion of a forest-levelling cyclone, and he hardly knows whether back of all there is a person or a force. While he is in this mad clutch of distraction, Zopher, a friend, comes along and warns him against losing faith in the Infinite. The salve that he gives him is the usual ointment that a man in prosperity gives his smitten brother. With its composition or its efficacy we are not concerned. We have all given and all received it often enough to know how little there is in it. The thing that concerns us is the eternal question that he puts to Job, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" That question we purpose to put to nature, to reason, to history and to Christ. If it was profitable to a mind distracted, it ought to be more profitable to a mind serene.

Nature, thou learned sage, with thy sun-crowned head and thy mountain-wrinkled brow, thou whose heart throbs are the swelling seas, whose blackboard is the night, whose letters are the stars, who of old didst discourse to the sages, tell us, can a man by searching find out God?

Listen, as the answer comes from the rattling thunders and the swishing seas, the lion's roar

and the serpent's hiss, the robin's song and the cedar's sigh! They are sent out to teach all nations, as the disciples were of old. Have they ever taught the nations who God is, what His nature is, the depth of His love, the wonders of His grace? Poets have fancied that they have. In the spotless snows they have read the declaration of God's purity; in the soft touch of the falling flake, His tenderness and love. But the very snows that teach the poet purity and kindness form the avalanches on the mountains and the slush on the plains and leave behind them a trail of pleurisy and pneumonia, tears and graves, that no man can measure.

In the bountiful rivers, with their ceaseless flow and verdant banks, the poet has seen the message of God's providential care. To him the tributaries are the fingers of God caressing the fevered brow of His continental children. But the rivers that bless one month are as likely to flood and damage the next. And what do they care if a boat capsizes on their bosom or a babe slips in from their treacherous shores? In the bending bush of the fragrant rose others have read the goodness of God. "Every common bush is aflame with God," said Browning. But the bush that charms the nostril is as ready to puncture the eye and destroy the sight.

Nature is orderly and in most of her operations intelligible and benign, but she no more teaches us God than the mathematical department of a

college teaches theology or a boiler shop, poetry. The most unsatisfactory book that the great Professor John Fiske ever wrote was "Through Nature to God," for it took one only through nature to the end of nature. You might as well try to tell me the complexion and nature and age and residence of the men who made your watch by inspecting it and studying its parts, as to try to find out God by studying nature. All that your watch teaches you is that the men who made it knew more than you do and all that nature teaches us about God is that He is wiser than we are.

Nature teaches us to apprehend God but not to comprehend Him. The keenest poet might wander from bush to bush and from crag to crag, skimming rivers and crossing seas, asking of all the question, "Who is God?" and he would not in a thousand years get a single answer. His quest would be as futile as the quest of the Holy Grail and his travels as ceaseless as those of the wandering Jew. The existence of God is undeniably demonstrated by nature but his personality is not. Nature takes us only to the outer hedge of the King's gardens. She gives us no view of even the palace, much less of his imperial self.

Having found the eloquent tongue of nature unable to tell us who God is, let us ask the question of that imperial monarch, the human mind. Shakespeare said, "There are richer things in heaven and earth than we in our philosophies ever dreamed of," but the converse is just as true,

for there are richer things in our philosophies than the starry spheres or the gorgeous earth ever told to man. Who dare say that Helen Keller, though deaf, dumb and blind, does not live in a richer world than tens of thousands with all their faculties. Man can retire into the solitude of silence, close his eyes and pass through richer experiences than many a king ever knew on his coronation day. He can bring up the past, reflect upon the present, conjure up the future, fly on the wings of fancy to the uttermost parts of the earth, tread the golden highway of faith to the very throne of God. If walls imprison him, he can pass through them and prattle again at his mother's knee or romp with his playmates in the field; if sickness oppresses him, he can shake off his weakness and in a moment climb the Alps or fight the surf.

And as imperial as is his fancy, so sovereign is his reason. He looks toward the tree and discerning the direction of the leaves says, "It's going to be clear." The clouds and the sky indicate him a liar, but clear it soon becomes. He looks at Uranus and because of her peculiar behavior he says that another planet farther out will soon appear. The silence of the centuries is against him, but men turn their telescopes in the direction he indicates and lo, old Neptune comes along!


He looks at the steam rising from the kitchen kettle and he says, "That steam can do some

work." A million steaming kettles laugh him to scorn, but presently the hills are echoing with the iron steeds and the mountains reverberating with their shrieking yells as they go panting up the steeps with a thousand tons behind them.

He sees birds flying through the air and he says, "If man can travel with the whale he can also travel with the eagle," and he tells men the reason for the faith that is in him. Darius Green with his flying machine mocks him, but to-day man flies.

Oh, wonderful is the mind of man! Before the world dreams of ships and cables, bridges and tunnels, cities and nations, they are already being forged on the anvil of hard, cold logic in thoughtful men's minds. The mind of man and not the shop is the home of the world's wonders. Surely if nature could not impress upon the plastic mind of the poet the secret of God, the philosopher, scientific and metaphysical, with his depth of reason, his syllogistic grasp, his far reaching chain of cause and effect, ought to be able to find Him. Has this wonderful mind of man succeeded in finding out God by reasoning toward and concerning Him?

The best answer to this question is the experience of Herbert Spencer. Being a friend and contemporary of Darwin, he soon left the Bible as an inspired book out of his calculations and pushed his way through the categories of thought without any reference to it. He spoke learnedly



about many things and led his readers to many helpful conclusions, but his conclusion about God was not only that we cannot know Him but that He is unknowable. Spencer declares not only that the human mind alone cannot find out God but that it cannot even reach Him. His logic falls asleep, like a tired child in a forest at evening, without having found the light at the farther end. The hopelessness of such a quest is brought out in the sad comment he made upon his life shortly before his death, when he said, "I doubt very much whether the world has been made better by a single page I have ever written."

Omar Khayyam of Persia, without having a Bible to cast aside, undertook the same task that engaged the genius of Spencer. He was the brightest pagan of the Christian era and drank deeply of the wells of silence and of thought. Like David of old, he considered the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which He had ordained. The evening sky, the rising moon, the potter's shop, the budding rose, the mouldering log, all steeped him in thought that reached out beyond the "bourne of time and space"; but when he summed the whole scheme up he could come to no other conclusion than that

"We are no other than a moving row
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go
Round the sun-illuminated lantern held
In midnight by the Master of the show."

All that thought told him about God was that
He was an inexorable, cold, relentless master of a
lot of sorry, helpless puppets and that we are

“ But helpless pieces of the game he plays
Upon this checker-board of nights and days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.”

Centuries and seas divide Khayyam and Spencer. They both attempted the same thing, trying to reason their way to God, and both failed. Should a third arise on some Pacific isle a thousand years hence and make the experiment again, we doubt not that the result would be the same.

Having found that reason cannot find out God, let us turn our question now to history. Sometimes in spite of our deepest thinking and our soundest conclusions, affairs turn out contrary to our convictions.

Patrick Henry, who magnetized the Virginia Legislature by crying, “Give me liberty or give me death,” in another speech warned his fellow countrymen against the dangers of a president, assuring them that there would be nothing between a president and an absolute czar but his own sweet will. Another example of history mocking prophecy is seen in the utilization of steam for ocean travel. The very ship that made the first trip across the Atlantic by steam carried in one of her cabins a pamphlet proving that it would

be impossible for a ship to hold enough coal to make such a voyage.

Perhaps the history of the world disproves the conclusions of poetry and philosophy in a similar manner. May it not be possible that some oracle somewhere in Grecian groves or India's hills or Egypt's plains may have declared God and revealed him to man, notwithstanding the fact that the poet and the philosopher could not discern him? Call the nations to witness.


Greece, what hast thou to say? We have learned much from thee. Thou hast taken us from the saddle to the book and given us the cultured music of speech for the war cry of the forest. Tell us, can a man by searching find out God?

Her answer is at hand when you go through Athens with Paul and see the statuary on the street. Every square contains a statue of a god, every public place a temple or a shrine to some deity, and to avoid the possibility of neglecting one they erect one to the unknown god. Instead of finding God Greece wanders into the grossest polytheism and worships so many gods that a Roman satirist flings the taunt at Athens that there are more gods there than men. But, you say, Greece was in her decadence then. Her glory had departed. If you want to know what Greece was able to do you must visit her in her prime. Be it so. Let us visit Greece five hundred years before the days of Paul and ask Socrates the ques-

tion of our text. Socrates, thou noblest, purest, wisest of the pagans, Gentile forerunner of the Nazarene, tell us, can a man by searching find out God? Listen as he speaks to his pupils the very answer to our question, "We shall never know God until God himself comes among men, or God's man." That was the confession of Grecian thought at its best.

The inability of Greece to find out God was shared by Egypt, India, China, Japan, America, all the nations of the earth, and if we were to summon the sages of these countries and repeat our question to them we should receive a similar reply or what would amount to the same.

Over amid the ruins of Egypt, the excavators recently came upon the kneeling image of an ancient priest. Upon the statue was carved an inscription showing that it was made five hundred years before the time of Moses. When the Egyptian diggers came upon it and saw its staring eyes they fled in terror, fearing that they had disturbed the devotions of some spirit. The statue is now in the Louvre in Paris. That priest kneeling there in the darkness of Egyptian oblivion represents the kneeling world, trying, without divine revelation, to find out God; and as the closing centuries left the one about where the opening centuries found it, so did they leave the other. It was a long, long night that the world spent in the dark, but just the kind of night the world needed to learn its own helplessness and insufficiency.



Turning now from the oracles and shrines of pagan piety and leaving the prayers of priests and songs of poets, let us ask the question of the Galilean. Jesus, thou Saviour of men, magnetic center of humanity, healer of broken hearts, moulder of nations, master of life and conqueror of death, far-seeing prophet of the invisible and the eternal, tell us, can a man by searching find out God? Turn not your ears to the sky for the answer, for He answered the question before He went back to the sky. Take up your old Bible, that surf-washed shell of eternal truth and catch the murmur of an ancient conversation: "No man knoweth who the Father is but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." If He would have hung it on a streamer from Venus to Mars and written it in letters of solar flame, He could not have made it plainer than that.

God must be known, if known at all, through revelation. Deductions, intuitions, beliefs, opinions are all suggestive but they caricature God more frequently than they describe him, as the stories of heathen mythology and the ideas of unregenerate men prove. The god of intellectual deductions is simply a personification of human nature, colored and conditioned by national traditions and provincial thought. Zeus was simply a big Greek; Jupiter, a big Roman; Odin, a big Scandinavian; Gitche Manito, a big Indian. Each was but an idealized national hero. So would be our God had not Jesus Christ come to

reveal the Father to us. We would have put the best of our national traits together, poets would have idealized them, priests exalted them to divinity and we would be worshipping them today as our god. The gods of men are never more than a compound man exalted, a gaseous giant in a palace of air just a little above the highest hill. Such a god, of course, could not long satisfy even a superstitious and sequestered people, and never an enlightened people such as we are. We must have a God who is no respecter of persons, a Father of Jew and Gentile, Greek and Roman, German and American, old and young, rich and poor, sad and glad; one whose heart throbs for and whose arms enfold all; the God whom Christ revealed.

Such being the case, the conclusion to our study of the hopeless quest is very plain; it is the conclusion which the Alpine guide impresses upon his tourists: an absolute, unquestioning obedience.

The crevasses of the Alps hold unnumbered thousands of climbers who thought they knew more than their guides and ventured on paths of their own selecting; the ossuaries hold the bones of many more who were recovered after their fatal plunge. To follow the guide everywhere requires gigantic faith, for he sometimes takes his tourist over ledges that show him an abyss of three thousand feet on one side and a perpendicular wall of two thousand feet on the other; at times it seems as though the earth were flat and standing on

edge, with the tourist and his guide half way up the plain, feeling as though the whole was soon to fall and annihilate them both forever. It is said that Alexander Dumas, once suddenly brought to one of these ledges, so trembled that he put a handkerchief between his teeth to keep from chattering them loose and that when he removed it, after passing the danger, he found that it was cut as clean as a butcher's cleaver would have done it. The Guide who leads us up the Alps of revelation takes us to ledges that look as dangerous, to heights that are as dizzy and promontories as bold; but He never lost a soul that followed Him and therefore has a right to demand that we follow Him unquestioningly wherever He goes.

When the tourist shrinks back and fears, the Alpine guide sometimes goes ahead and sits in the very jaws of an ice cavern to reassure him. Whatever Jesus asks you to do in climbing up to God, He has done before you. He asks you to turn your back on the world; He did it himself. He asks you to serve others; He did it long ago. He asks you to suffer for others; He did it unto death. Everything that He ever asked any mortal to do since He called his first disciple, He did himself.

Follow Him, though He leads you through poverty, through abuse and through hunger; follow him everywhere, for "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The climb

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may be hard and the road steep but it leads to the summit that shows you God. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

THE DRY BROOK

"And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land."

I Kings 17:7.

Of all the charming scenes of nature there are few so fascinating as the bubbling; gurgling, chattering brook. The stars will throw us into wonder, the sunset sky will soothe us when we are tired, the solitude of the forest will remove us from the din and jargon of this rattling world, but for solitude and companionship and wonder combined the brook is the paragon of them all. It talks to you, while you meander along its banks, without contradicting or misinterpreting you. It tells you by its clearness how pure your soul should be, it shows you by its progress how swift your days pass by, it tells you by its chatter how blithe your life should be, for it chatters most when it strikes the biggest stones.

Besides its beauty it commends itself to us for its usefulness.

"How busy the wheels are in turning the stone
And grinding to flour the grain we have grown."

It is the brook that turns them round.

"How luscious the fields in summer time grow,
Spreading out the rich carpets where winter had
snow."

It is the brook that helps to lay them.

"How softly the willows, in modest green drest,
Rock to slumber the babes of the oriole's nest."

The brook supports the willows. It is the life, not only of the unconscious, inanimate things of the meadow, but the guardian also of the very birds.

But what a poor, melancholy spectacle is a brook run dry, a brook without a brook! Nothing to give to the birds but dry, indigestible pebbles, nothing to give to the trees but dry and sun-parched crust, nothing to show to man but a scar in the face of the earth. Oh, what a difference between the sparkling, bickering, laughing brook and the dull, prosaic bed it leaves behind. It is as great a difference as that we notice when the soul of a dear one has fled and left us only the body in which it sparkled.

But the dry brook sometimes comes. Not all the streams that manufacture transient diamonds by the way can sing with the brook that England's poet laureate knew,

"For men may come and men may go
But I go on forever,"

for not all are fed by fountains that are as rich and unaffected by the droughts as the fountain of that delightful stream.

Beside one of these frail streams, Elijah, Israel's ancient prophet, once was stranded. The



story of his residence there and the causes that drove him to it is one that is both pleasing and pathetic.

When Ahab came to the throne of Israel he soon dragged Israel into sin and, of course, into the displeasure of God. He did evil, the Bible tells us, above any that were before him in Jerusalem. To pile Pelion upon Ossa, he married a heathen wife, the infamous and wicked Jezebel. It is doubtful whether one throne ever held two such bad hearts as the throne of Israel held when Ahab and Jezebel sat upon it. Jezebel, being a heathen, naturally brought some of the priests of her heathen religion into Israel when she became the wife of Ahab, and soon had altars erected for them and the people to become their followers. It was not long until the prophets of Jehovah were persecuted and in some instances slain. In the place of Jehovah the apish followers of this wicked pair placed Baal and Ashtoreth. Baal was the god of business, of gold, and Ashtoreth the god of irreligious society.

But God is not mocked long. At last all sin biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder, and sometimes the "at last" is not far removed from the beginning. It happens to be so with Ahab and his people. After they have worshipped their heathen gods long enough without disturbance to feel secure, God withdraws the wooing hand of mercy and looking to his attending angels, ever ready to do his bidding, points toward

them the finger of condemnation. While they are flying out with their message to the winds and the clouds, telling them to pass the land of Israel by, God sends Elijah the prophet in to Ahab to tell him that his sin and the sin of his people is about to be punished. "As the Lord, the God of Israel, liveth," he says, "before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

The message is hardly delivered before the sentence passes into execution. The next morning there is, as was said, no dew upon the earth. Ahab and his people, however, pay no attention to the absence of dew because they have known mornings before that had none in sight. The next dawn arrives with equal dryness, but still no attention is paid to the fact, because two successive mornings without dew was nothing to occasion fear. But when a week passes by without a drop upon the grass, they notice that the blades begin to wither. They hope, however, that it is only one of the unusual occurrences of nature. Instead, the second week continues the work of the first, and the trees begin to look like drooping soldiers after battle. The streams begin to fall, the sky glows like a furnace, day after day, morning, noon and evening. Even the night gives no relief. Ever and anon a cloud is seen to form in the distant sky and promise them relief, but it only approaches them to pass them by and leave them more wretched than before. Instead of alleviat-

ing their distress, it only mocks them for having hoped. The fabled sufferings of Tantalus are reduced to actual facts. The whole earth becomes a hard, dry cake, hot as the iron rail of summer time. Stream after stream dries up until at last the king, even the king, whose supply of water would naturally be the last to become exhausted, is compelled to send servants throughout the land in search of water for his horses and cattle.

While this national alarm is throwing the people into fear, Elijah is quietly living in seclusion in the east, by the side of the brook Cherith. After he delivered his threatening message to Ahab, telling him of the coming drought, the Lord told him to go there and hide himself, telling him that the brook should furnish him with water and the ravens with food. What a difference! The king, with his thousand lords and servants trembling at the thought of dying from thirst, the prophet his servant, without a penny of his own, living like a king. Verily, there are times even here below when the first shall be last and the last first.

But as the months come and go, Elijah notices that his brook Cherith also begins to fail. Will God neglect the man who risked his life for him? Elijah will not let himself believe it. He allays his apprehensions by telling himself that God is only testing his faith, and that after his fear has passed away the stream will again burst forth with greater swelling than it ever knew before.


But in spite of all the coddling that Elijah gives his faith, the stream continues to grow less. He can now walk down into the very bed of the former stream, now he can tiptoe his way across from stone to stone, now it only looks like a silvery serpent winding its way slowly in and out, now like little globules of quicksilver left here and there in the deepest holes. The prophet still persists in his faith in God and stays though but little is left. But it is not long until even that little is gone.

Then Elijah rises and goes to Zarephath, where he finds a widow woman gathering sticks. He asks her to bring him a little water and a morsel of food. She says, "As the Lord liveth, I have not so much as a cake, only a little meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruise, and I am gathering these sticks to go in and prepare the meal for me and my son."

Elijah answers, "Go and do as thou sayest; make me a little cake first and then for thee and thy son, for the Lord hath said 'the barrel of meal shall not waste nor the cruise of oil fail until the day that He will send rain upon the earth.'"

She went and did as the prophet told her, and she and he and her son ate many days. Thus ends the narrative as far as we are now concerned with its details.

The question that we may want to ask and answer now is, "Why did God dry up Elijah's brook?" We can see why he dried up those on which Ahab and his idolatrous people depended.



He dried them up to remind them of God. They forgot their God, and in their folly perhaps said, "There is no God." Goaded on by the apparent prosperity of the heathen nations round about, they fancied that they could prosper as well by worshipping their idol gods, and as their idolatry increased their spiritual eyes became more dim. A thick cloud came between God and them, and nothing but a severe punishment would remind them of God and His eternal decrees. So to arrest their attention and prepare them to listen to the prophet later and repent of their wicked ways, He sends them this horrible drought. But why did he dry up the brook Cherith where Elijah His prophet was? To remind him of man.

He dried up the brooks of Ahab to remind him of God; He dried up the brook of Elijah to remind him of man. Were man relieved of the suffering common to man, he would lose his sympathy for man, no matter how pious he himself might be. The immunity from suffering and want would isolate man from his fellow man, as much if it came from God's favor as it does when it comes from wealth.

We cannot understand and sympathize with the people when we are on a pedestal. We must travel the dusty highway with them, cut our feet on the flint that cuts theirs, scratch our hands in the briars that make theirs bleed, climb their hills, ford their streams and see our own dry up as theirs do.

It was in pursuance of this principle that God came down in Christ Jesus to bear our burdens in the flesh and know from actual experience what mortal living is. It is in pursuance of this principle that kings of earth sometimes travel in disguise among their people and for a while subject themselves to the limitations and the hardships of the masses. Emerson said, "We must descend to meet," and he never spoke with more wisdom.

God dried up Elijah's brook to bring him down from his spiritual isolation to the place where the people dwelt. He had to know their sufferings and to know their sufferings he had to know their want.

The subject of God's impartiality has been a subject that has vexed many a pious and thoughtful soul.

Here is the lightning sputtering through the skies. That it should strike a brewery or a gambling house would not seem strange, but it strikes churches and hospitals just as freely. We wonder why.

Here is sickness stalking through the land, laying its hot hand on people and claiming them as its victim. That it should capture those who are bad and reckless of their health would not seem strange, but it numbers among its victims also those who are careful and needed both in the church and the home and the city. We wonder why.

Here are great disasters, a Johnstown flood, a

volcanic eruption, a western cyclone. That they should overtake those who are engaged in works of iniquity and take their life or their property we could easily understand, but the righteous perish alike with the wicked. Why? The Bible says, "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling, for He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." It says, "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."

What do these statements mean in the face of such indiscriminate visitations? We seem to be in the same danger that our worldly neighbor is. Has God forgotten his ancient promise? No, God never forgets. Men may forget the vows they have made. Even a mother, who is all love to her child (and what remembers like love?) may forget some of the many promises she makes to her child, but God does not forget. Every promise that He ever made you can present to Him and He will honor it. But be careful that you do not press more into those promises than God originally put into them.

If a man gives me a promissory note for one thousand dollars I have a right to expect him to pay it when it matures, but if I add a cipher to the sum and come with a note for ten thousand dollars instead of one, I am a forger, because I am not presenting the note that he gave me, not the promise he wrote. There are many people who

find these promises of God in the Bible, and by the time they present them to God they have so changed them that they are forged notes — promises that God did not make at all.

Now, we have no right to take the old observation of Solomon, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," and go to God with it as a sight draft upon Him. It is not a promise of God: it is an observation of Solomon. 'Tis true that the observations of a man as wise and widely acquainted as Solomon is almost equivalent to a promise, but it is not a promise — for some of the righteous do beg bread and are poor and forsaken. David, the father of Solomon, was a man after God's own heart, and he said in a fit of great anguish, "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off."

Neither has one a right to go with that wonderful ninety-first psalm to God and lay it before Him as a promise to keep us from all harm. 'Tis true it says, "No evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling," but didn't P. P. Bliss go over the Ashtabula bridge to his death? Didn't Fanny Crosby spend a long life in blindness? And didn't Sankey pass his latter days in the same physical darkness? Are not the missionaries of the cross the most consecrated people on the earth, and are not the little cemeteries at the mission stations fairly dotted with

the graves of those who were living in the secret of His presence and under the protection of His promises?

Now, one of two things must be true: either God failed to keep them or we have put too much in them. The former alternative no Christian would dare to entertain. The latter must be true. We put too many ciphers to the promises of God. We forge his notes. The ancient promise does say, "No evil shall befall thee," but art thou that which mine eye beholds? Then thou art not eternal, for in a hundred years from now thou wilt be dissolved and the grave-digger's spade will not be able to find the slightest vestige of thee.

But thou art not that which mine eye beholds, thou art that which only the spiritual eye can see — that which will take its flight some day and leave the visible behind to be called by man the mortal remains. The essential being that you are is spiritual — you are a spirit with a body, and to that spirit the ancient promises with all of the ancient richness are gloriously and everlastingly true "that no evil shall befall the essential you."

The Ashtabula disaster did not kill the soul of Bliss. He expected to awake in Cleveland; he only awoke a little farther on. The blindness of Fanny Crosby's eyes did not keep her soul in darkness. She lived on a Patmos such as few mortals ever dared to dream of and she caught visions celestial as splendid as those of John the Apostle.

God dried up the brook also to develop Elijah. Sufferings have a value apart from their social merits. They refine every feature of our life. Faith grows stronger, patience sweeter, devotion richer under trial. The electric bulb goes through no fewer than eighty processes, many of them trials of fire; they are needful that the bulb may glow. The lives that shine are the lives that have passed through the furnace.

The trees on the mountain and the ore in the earth and the ivory in the tusk are useless to man until the trees have been cut and the ore melted and the elephant hurt. After much hacking and planing and sawing and melting and cutting and bending and joining the organ appears, ready to reproduce everything from the human voice to the full orchestra. Under the mountain the zinc did nothing but sleep the dreamless sleep of silence; in the organ it breathes the love of God as tenderly as the Saviour did of old. It had to go through fire to do it.

Grandier than any organ is the human heart. The elements that make it what it is must go through the fire too. Jacob must lose his son, Joseph must lose his father, Moses must go into exile, Daniel into the lions' den, Jesus into the wilderness, Paul into jail, Elijah to the dry brook.

Oh, when our time comes to suffer let us remember that no depths are below the presence of God and no lengths beyond the reach of His love. Talmage in one of his poetic flights said that an-

gels were once sent out throughout the universe to find, if they could, an end to the love and mercy of God. With wide spread wings they flew in rapid strides to the north and the south and the east and west, on and on, out and out to worlds beyond the ken of men or angels. One after another they came, weary and worn, back to the heavenly city, and as they reverently bowed their heads before the throne, they all declared, "There is no end to the mercy of God."

Oh, let sorrows like sea billows roll, I shall go on singing as I have always sung

" There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice
Which is more than liberty;

" There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

" If our lives were but more simple
We should take him at his word,
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

WHY WE LOVE THE CHURCH

"Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honor dwelleth."

Psalm 26:8.

By the time a man has reached maturity there are usually a few places that are dearer to him than all the rest of the world. One of them is the house in which he was born. Mr. Bryan a few years ago bought his birth-house in Indiana. He does not intend to live in it because his interests are elsewhere, but he doesn't want it in alien hands. There isn't a man living who wouldn't do the same if he could afford to.

Another place that we love is the old school house.

" Still sits the school house by the road,
A ragged beggar sleeping;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry vines are creeping."

Whether our school house was by the road or in the town, whether we see it only once in a while or often, it is sacred to our memory. There isn't a young father or mother taking a child to the first school who does not see another day twenty-five or thirty years ago when he was taken there in the

same way, and who in seeing that picture does not grow mellow with tender memories.

Another place that we love is the place in which we used to play. The children of today will carry with them into the years to come the memory of a well equipped playground. God bless them in their privileges, but if they get more fun out of their larger privileges than we used to get out of an alley where one man's barn door served for first base and another's on the other side of the alley for third, they will surely be enjoying themselves.

How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood: the long lane, the apple orchard, the swimming hole, the fishing bank! How hushed our voices become as we visit those sacred places and how tender is the conversation between us and the boys we used to be, as we go hand in hand through the years together. It brings mist to the eyes sometimes, but it is the mist that is tinged with the radiance of childhood's happy morn.

We love also the place in which we made our start in business and the place in which we began housekeeping. The old soldier loves the place in which he fought for his country. Gettysburg is dearer to many who live a thousand miles away than to some who live here. Many make this field their annual shrine; others have come here to live.

Then there are some very sacred places where the roses grow among the marble. Oh, how precious is the sacred dust that lies like a blanket over the still more sacred dust beneath. While Tal-

mage was preaching in Brooklyn one of his families lost two fine young sons, who were drowned in Lake Lucerne. The bodies had not yet been recovered when the first Sunday after the accident came and it was not known whether they ever could be found. But Talmage preached upon the event and spoke of the great day when the sea shall give up its dead and when all the lost shall be found. "Yet," he said, "the mother of the boys told me, 'It would be such a comfort if they could be found and brought home for burial. It would be like tucking them away for the night.'"

David knew all about these places. He knew the sacredness of the grave, for he had a little boy in one; he knew the sacredness of the hillsides, for he kept watch over his father's flocks among the hills of Bethlehem where a thousand years later the shepherds heard the angel choir; he knew the sacredness of the battlefield. I imagine that he went more than once to the brook where he found the pebble that slew Goliath and to the cave where he eluded the soldiers of Saul. He knew all about them. He loved many places, even as you and I; but there was one place above all others that he loved, and that was the house of God.

There were two things for which David was homesick when he was in forced exile. One was water from the old well at Bethlehem. "Oh, that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate." The other was the house of God, "My soul longeth, yea even

fainteth, for the courts of the Lord." "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Why was the house of the Lord so precious to David? Because of its architectural splendor? Part of our delight in our temple comes from the beauty of the building. We have a room whose every line is pleasing to the eye, whose every color is soft and chaste, whose whole effect is that of dignity and grace. The beautiful plays an important part in every imposing church edifice and it is not to be despised, for the temple that God built and frescoed with the sunrise, with the sunset, with floating clouds and moving stars is beautiful too.

But David did not love the house of God because of its architectural glory. It had none. All that there was of the temple in David's day was the tent called the tabernacle: no steeple, no dome, no bell, no organ, no memorials, no ponderous doors, no marble stairways, no frescoes, nothing but a tent with the ark of the Covenant, and a few altars and the utensils. That was all that was visible to the eye. Why did David love this? Because God dwelt there. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thine house and the place where Thine honor dwelleth." But isn't God everywhere? Surely; so is water. Water is in the tree, in the blade of grass, in your hand, but when you want a drink you go to the well or the faucet. So do we find God.

Moody is a household character; his life is known everywhere and his influence goes to the remotest mountain cabin. We can read and enjoy and know him anywhere on this earth, but go to Northfield, where he was born and founded the great assemblies, and stand by those two mounds under which his body and that of his wife lie sleeping on Round Top and you will feel the personality of Moody as you never did before. It does not matter what speakers you hear,—the thing that will make the deepest impression upon you is the great life of Moody. “He, being dead, yet speaketh.”

When Lincoln breathed his last, Stanton lifted up his head and said to those gathered about the bed, “He belongs to the ages.” He does; but he belongs a little more to you who have visited the White House, and the house in which he died, or the house in Kentucky in which he was born.

Though spirit is not confined by granite walls or mountain ranges, since any time we wish we may take the wings of fancy and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, yet the spirit of God, and man, does speak more plainly in some places and through some things than others.

When I returned from Concord, made famous by Emerson and Hawthorne and Thoreau and the Alcotts, I showed a friend of mine, an old preacher, a few stones that I had picked up from the yards and the graves of these celebrities. He

said, with a twinkle in his eye, "If you would have told me I could have given you any number of stones from our back yard." Yes, stones are plentiful, but not the kind with sermons in them.

The spirit of God was in that tent as it is in the church of Jesus Christ today, and God spoke there to David as nowhere else in the world. That is why he was glad when they said unto him, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

A man's spirit is in his word. So is God's spirit. Where else on earth has God's word been so consistently and so faithfully read and interpreted through the ages as in the church? Nowhere! The church as in the days of David is teaching and preaching the old word and meeting God as He cannot be met at the bush or in the cave.

He loved the house of the Lord because it always lifted him. How often do the Old Testament writers speak of men going up into the house of the Lord and of the Lord coming down to meet them. Church going is an ascent. *It is an ascent materially.* You are all better dressed than you were yesterday. That is an elevation in itself. While fine feathers do not make fine birds, yet it is more pleasing to look at the robin than the sparrow and we prefer the canary to the crow.

It is an ascent mentally. You did not come here in the spirit of trade and gain, with the cares and the worries that attend the shop and the store

and the factory. You came here in the spirit of worship, the highest attitude of which the mind is capable.

Church going *is an ascent socially*. If there were no heaven, no hell, no God, no inspired truth, the church, in bringing the people together Sabbath after Sabbath in their best clothes, in their best frame of mind, to think the best thoughts that the mind is capable of thinking, would be doing the greatest good that any institution could do for man.

The other day the youngest daughter of Victor Hugo died in France. When she was a young woman, she suddenly disappeared. All Europe was searched for her but she was not to be found. At length she came to light in New York City, seemingly half-dazed and half-crazed. All that she said was, "I am the daughter of Victor Hugo." How she came here no one could learn and she never told. She was taken back home and from that distant day till a few days ago, when she died at eighty-five, she lived a recluse. Once she was induced to witness a play based on one of her father's writings, but this she did from the dark corner of a private box. She seldom met friends and then never spoke of the past.

That is what we all might come to but for our gathering in the house of the Lord. There isn't a life that doesn't have tragedies enough to make a hermit and send the victim into the cell of morbid memory. Coming into the house of God where

some are always happy lifts us above the damp of our own individual sorrow and warms us in the sunshine of the general felicity. David loved the house of God also because he had deep things explained there.

Asaph was one time worried about the inequality among men: the fatness of bad men and the emptiness of good men.

"I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

"They are not in trouble as other men are."

"Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish."

"They speak loftily."

"They set their mouth against the heaven; and their tongue walketh through the earth."

Thinking of this, Asaph says, "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped." "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

Oh, how many things are explained in the house of God! Not because of the wisdom of the preacher nor because the preacher happens to know what particular questions vex you. Have you never noticed how, when the preacher is moving along one line of thought, engaged in one theme, you pick up a stray remark, to him entirely subordinate, and take it home as a precious ointment or a lighted taper? Each takes according to his need and according to his capacity. The

worshiper who comes with no particular sorrow and no special burden can sit back and take the text and follow the sermon step by step as a doctor in a convention follows an expert. The worshiper comes like the patient for just one thing, relief or cure, and willingly waits until the preacher pulls down his remedy and satisfies him.

David loved the house of God also because of its treasures. The most precious thing that the Jews ever had was in the tabernacle, the ark of the Covenant. It was their boast, at times their fetish. Thus are the cathedrals and churches of Christendom enhanced and loved. St. Peter's is said to hold the body of the very disciple who preached the sermon on Pentecost; the Cathedral of Prague holds the body of St. John of Nepomuc in a silver sarcophagus. But richer far than those treasures that can be touched and seen and handled are the invisible treasures of memory. How deeply stirred must David's poetic soul have been as he thought of the historic associations of those treasures.

To many a cold, sordid Jew, Aaron's rod was simply a stick in a chest; to David it was the sceptre of God. To many the pot of manna meant no more than the corn in the tomb of an Egyptian mummy; when David thought of it, he whispered softly to himself, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." In many the tables of the law awoke no more sentiment than the law books in the library of an at-



torney; David thought of them and saw again the old prophet climbing the rugged sides of Sinai for the lamp and the light that were to guide the world.

Standing before the tabernacle with its precious ark was to David like standing on the Alps and hearing the seven echoes. So is our church precious to us. We have no ark of the Covenant in our building, we have no saints entombed here, no nails of the cross, no relics of any kind; but we have what is richer than all the treasures of earth, we have the treasures of a blessed memory.

The walls of the House of Lords in England are covered with the paintings of former sovereigns. The lords of the empire are therefore surrounded with a great host of witnesses every time they assemble. So are we, and what holy witnesses they are,—father, mother, sister, brother, wife, husband, son, daughter, the true and faithful who in happier days gathered with us here. These are the treasures that doubly consecrate a sanctuary. These are the things that lift us and cheer and comfort us. Fortunate is the man who has a church behind him. He takes something with him into the world that is worth more than a purse of gold.

David loved the house of God also because of what it cost. The material of the tabernacle was of the best, as was the temple. God always asks for the best because He always gives the best. But the cost of the tabernacle was beyond the

price of rubies. All things of value are. A birth isn't paid for when the father pays the doctor and the nurse. A life of devotion is the only thing that can ever pay for that. She who goes down to the gates of death to bring a new life to earth pays the real price and the debt to her no silver and gold can ever pay.

Oh, what a price was paid for the church of David's day: Four hundred years in bondage, forty years of wandering in the wilderness, countless deaths along the way, incessant warfare with heathen tribes en route, bitter battles even in Canaan. How the prophets were denounced, how the judges were slandered! From the hot tears of Moses to the broken hopes of Samuel the way of the spiritual leaders of Israel was thorn-hedged and flinty, blood stained and dangerous. The seers are the ones who paid the greater price. How great the price of our Christian church! Not the tears of Paul, not the self torture of Stylites, nor yet the sufferings of the confessors and the martyrs exhaust the price of our Christian church. Those who have suffered that we might worship would make the grandest procession that this earth ever witnessed. It would stretch around the world, traverse every country on the globe, go through caves and catacombs, enliven the forests and dazzle the cities. The solid earth alone could not contain it. The Atlantic would have to help, for the heartaches of the Mayflower and the Welcome and Sara Maria are among

the most precious records of heaven; the Pacific would have to help, for it alone could repeat the sufferings of the hundreds who have gone to its many isles; the South Seas would have to give space for Gardner and Calvert and Paton and the thousands of others who struggled and prayed with them; the procession would wind around Cape Horn, it would zigzag its way through the icebergs of Alaska, it would necklace the Alps, it would move through Africa from Cairo to the Cape; but with all its magnitude and with all its splendor it would be like a cathedral without a dome until the hero of Palm Sunday rode at its head. His sufferings and His death inspired all others and in the all-inclusive capacity of His deity exceeded them in intensity and extent. He above all paid the price not only of our redemption but of our church. Therefore we love it. It cost all that heaven had. Its price is above the price of rubies, hence it is more to be desired than silver or gold.

But David loved the sanctuary also for the vision it gave him. He didn't have the high rock of assurance that we have in the fourteenth chapter of St. John. His boat never touched the shores of Patmos, neither did he ever hear that "this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal put on immortality"; he was a thousand years too early for that. Yet he felt sure that he was going "to dwell in the house of the Lord forever." He was confident that though his

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little boy would never come to him again, he himself would go to him. He knew this because he loved the sanctuary above his chief joy and there was led to the window that opens toward the shining city. Oh, how clear that city becomes to the saints when they gather in the house of the Lord!

A tourist once asked an English farmer how far he could see from his highest field. He replied, "On Sunday we can see clear across to Sheffield." "Why on Sunday?" asked the tourist. "Because on Sunday the mills are closed and the smoke is gone," replied the farmer. On Sunday we can see clear across to heaven from this our high field of devotion. Here we have reached the Christian's Beulah land.

"O Beulah land, sweet Beulah land,
As on the highest mount I stand,
I look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the shining glory shore,
My heaven, my home forever more."

"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house and the place where thine honor dwelleth." "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her skill. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

HEAVEN

In the midst of the Niagara River just above the Falls there are three small islands, joined by bridges and known as the Sister Islands. Along the edge of one of these islands there is a little pool or eddy into which, if you place your hand, you are said to render yourself deaf to all the roar of the mighty river above you. There you are one moment in the midst of the noisy, tumbling waters coming along with the maddened frenzy of Pandemonium, rumbling and tumbling, splashing and foaming, as though each drop were rushing confusedly to escape the wrath of some avenging fury, all noise and confusion about you, all noise and confusion within; the next, when you stoop to place your hand in this little eddy, though still in the midst of the confusion, you are free from its distraction, as free as the bird in the air.

There is in this world a Niagara of thought as well as a Niagara of water; and as the latter is dotted with islands, so is the former. The islands in the river of thought are words, and among them there are three sister islands as beautiful as any that ever kissed the liquid's foam. They are mother, home and heaven, the sweetest words in any language. And as the islands in the rushing

Niagara are joined by bridges, so are these by the bridges of affection. He who loves his mother loves his home, and he who loves home loves heaven. And as it is possible for one standing on the brink of one of Niagara's islands, if he stoop and place his hand in the water, to render himself deaf to the great confusion, so it is possible for man, when he stoops and places his hand in the thought of mother, home or heaven, to place himself without the distractions of the world's commotion.

There is in every life the rush of Niagara; our thoughts, our emotions follow one another in the quick succession of its tumbling waters and they sometimes almost deafen us by their confusion, but there is release from all to him who bathes the hand of meditation in the memory of his mother, home or heaven. The world without may do its worst, the world within may roar its best, he is deaf to all their cries and might as well, so far as their distractions upon him are concerned, be in Paradise, for he hears them not.

We want to withdraw ourselves from the noisy confusion of the world without and the world within and dip our hands in the waters of one of these beautiful sister islands; we want to meditate on the brink of home, and from the brink of home cast our eyes as tourists over to that better land of heaven. The languages of earth have many words for heaven. One calls it the Summer land and pours forth her soul in the melody of song.

" Beyond the winter's storms and blights,
Beyond the summer's shining strand,
There waits a land of joy and light,
O light and fadeless summer land.

" O summer land that gleams afar
Beyond the light of sun or star;
O summer land, O summer land,
We long for thee, dear summer land."

Another speaks of heaven as a gathering of the faithful for the calling of the roll,

"When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound
And Time shall be no more,
When the morning breaks eternal bright and fair,
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other
shore,
When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there."

Another conceives of heaven as a land that is never befogged with mists or darkened by storms, a land where the redeemed shall stand and know even as they are known.

"We shall come with joy and gladness,
We shall gather round the throne;
Face to face with those that love us,
We shall know as we are known;
And the song of our redemption
Shall resound through endless day,
When the shadows have departed
And the mists have rolled away."

Another, going into raptures over St. John's description of the jasper walls and the gates of

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pearl, conceives of heaven as some resplendent city
outshining the brightest that earth ever held.

“ Some one will enter the pearly gates,
 By and by, by and by;
Taste of the glories that there await.
 Shall you? Shall I?
Some one will travel the streets of gold;
Beautiful visions will there unfold;
Feast on the pleasures so long foretold.
 Shall you? Shall I? ”

Another, thinking of life as a great ocean, conceives of heaven as a welcome harbor, where the righteous voyagers shall finally land, and pours forth his soul in that beautiful song that for fifty years has brought peace and hope to storm-tossed souls.

“ Shall we meet in that blest harbor
When our stormy voyage is o'er?
Shall we meet and cast the anchor
By the fair, celestial shore? ”

The pictures of heaven made by man with pen and brush are as many and varied as the shades of the summer clouds, but none of them awakens so much sentiment in us as the picture that Jesus painted when He said, “ In My Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you,” for there is no place like home on earth and nothing more to be desired in heaven than simply another and better home. What are splendid cities

and spacious parks to a homesick man? What would the golden streets and the jasper walls mean to a man who did not feel at home when once within the walls and on the streets?

The propriety of calling heaven a home as Jesus did is seen in a moment when we analyze the meaning of home and apply it to heaven. What does our home on earth mean to us?

It means, first of all, the place of love, a love that changes not with waning moons and passing years, a love that never grows old. Outside of the home love is found, but it is an affection that often depends for its action upon the worthiness of the one upon whom it is bestowed. When one is noble and pure, the world as naturally turns toward him in love as the mariner's needle turns toward the pole; but when his nobility gives way to vice and his purity grows black with sin, the world just as naturally turns away. In the home it is not so. There love glows like a hearth fire for all around, whether they be sinners or saints, whether they be worthy or unworthy. Even so is it in our Father's house. There is not one who is worthy of God's love in heaven but Jesus and the angels. John in his vision from Patmos saw on the right hand of the throne of God a sealed book containing some of the mysteries of the Almighty, and a strong angel came forth and proclaimed with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and loose the seals thereon," and no man in heaven or earth or under the earth was able to

open it. All unworthy. Yet all loved in heaven in spite of the unworthiness, making it truly a home on high.

The propriety of calling heaven a home as Jesus did is furthermore seen when we remember that home is the place of sincerity, the natural fruit of genuine love. The world without has some sincerity in it, but when we read every day of the scandals in high places and low, the false figures placed in official reports, the padded registration of populous city wards, the fictitious entries on public ledgers, the watered stocks and embezzled funds, we are almost led to wonder whether sincerity does not feel like a stranger among so much that is foreign and insincere. These public scandals and insincerities, coupled with those smaller yet more painful insincerities of those we call our friends, make the world all the more inhospitable to the soul that longs for open-hearted frankness; but in the home it is not so. There we know each other even as we know ourselves; we neither attempt to conceal our weakness nor fear to speak of our strength. A mirror does not reflect more completely that which stands before it than soul answers soul as they appear before each other in the home. There is an openness there as wide as that of the daisy. There may be locks to the doors of the home, but to the doors of the hearts within that home there are none, they swing on double hinges and recede at the breath of love. Even so, only with a better understanding, shall it

be in heaven. Then we also shall know as we are known and find absolute sincerity. The poisonous tongue of the back biter, the envious eye of the jealous one, the daggered hand of the hypocrite that salutes you in your presence but turns with murder toward you in your absence, shall be missing up in heaven, for they shall have their part in the lake that burneth for ever and ever. Face to face we'll see and be seen; our thoughts, our emotions in heaven will be as open to the heavenly host as the pebble strewn floor of the clear and crystal stream is to him who glides along on its liquid surface. We shall know even as we are known by God now. God knows us completely. "He knoweth our thoughts afar off," he readeth our prayers before they are uttered, He sees away down to the depths. So we shall know and be known, and with such a knowledge deception or insincerity of the smallest kind is impossible; hence the propriety of calling heaven our home, the place of absolute sincerity.

But home is more than a place of love and sincerity; it is also the place of joy. The world without has happiness, but the world without has little joy. Happiness is the sensation of pleasure that comes to one who is temporarily relieved from pain or want. We see one who had a hard struggle with life suddenly fall into the possession of a fortune, and we say as we see his radiant face, "What a happy man he is." We see a flood of men come pouring out of the shop when

the day's work is over and we see happiness stamped on every face. Others with brains perplexed and nerves grown tired are seen laughing from ear to ear at the theatre, dispelling with the happiness of an hour the fatigue of a day; but happiness is only a passing emotion, rising up like a bubble flung from a pipe to soar a little, look beautiful and burst. It is a welcome comfort to the man who has left his father's house to live among kind strangers, but it is far from the deep abiding joy of a home, as far as the paste jewel is from the diamond or the sputtering candle from the stars of night. The happiness of the world splashes and foams like some shallow brooks, making noise enough to flood a farm, yet drying up before the summer is half gone; the joy of home flows on deep and wide and noiselessly as the Hudson through the Palisades and the Amazon through the forests.

There is a sweetness in the home as it ought to be that surpasses the sweetness of roses, a music that is richer than song, a light that is softer than moonbeams, a contentment that is better than a feast, a joy that winds its way around the heart as the vine around the trellis, and that makes home a fit comparison to the place the Saviour has gone to prepare, for will He not when He meets us greet us with, "Come ye blessed, enter into the joy of your Lord." The first thing mentioned of our heavenly residence to you as you land on the

other shore is that it is a place of joy as was your home on earth.

But the home is also a place of peace. No ship, however strongly it may be built, can long endure the raps of the ocean without casting anchor in some harbor. The winds and the waves will weaken it on top, the barnacles will despoil it beneath. What the ship needs man needs. He must have some place, after battling with the world in the store, the office, the factory or the commercial market, where he can cast anchor and feel at rest. No place in the wide world gives you that sense of peace as does your own home. It matters not where it is or of what material built. Be it a palace or a cabin, on Fifth Avenue or a mountain trail, it is your harbor. John Howard Payne was travelling in Venice, the city of palaces, when he wrote "Home, Sweet Home." They were grand, the homes he saw. But ever and anon as he would pass one after another and see its varied architecture and the happy faces in the windows, there would come up in his mind the picture of a little one and a half story house across the sea on Long Island where he was born, until at last, with choking in his throat and homesick sighs in his heart, he sat down and wrote because he had to,

"'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

He was surrounded with splendor but it gave him

no peace when he was away, worn and tired, because it was not his home. The splendor of the buildings loomed up around him as giant billows rise up around the ship, but what is the majesty of a storm to a ship that needs rest? It is mockery upon its helplessness, as those buildings were to Payne. Had he been able by some mysterious power to suddenly transport his little home from Long Island to Venice, we might not have the song that he wrote, but oh, what transports of joy would have burst from his eyes if he could suddenly have seen it and hastened to its door. He would have felt like some wrecked mariner cast up after days of aimless drifting on the shore of his own dear land. Even so it is with that residence in heaven: it gives those who enter there a peace that passeth knowledge. We have it already in Jesus Christ, and if the peace He gives us here is so sweet, what must it be to be there, with the battles all fought, the struggles all over, the pains all endured, the disappointments all gone, the tears all wiped away.

The home also suggests reunions. In the golden days of home life the beds are all full, the rooms all used, the floors strewn with toys, the piano keys and the window panes marked with baby fingers, the evening table piled with school books and games. But before the parents realize it their home is deserted. Where once the prattle of babies and the laughter of children made every moment vibrant there is now monastic silence.

Where once the nutmeg grater and the bread board and the potato masher made frequent visits to the parlor there is now nothing out of place. But what a shell! The music of the old-time voices is gone, the radiance of the dear familiar faces vanished. The world that paid so little for them has them, we the letter, the photo and the longing heart.

Oh how sweet in the days of separation is the family gathering! How sweet is it to the children, how sweeter still to the children's parents! They come, those rare, glad, joyful days, like hill-tops whence we see the towns from which we came and the cities to which we are going. They always suggest the home that was and the home that is to be. Which of the two receives the longer gaze depends upon how many of the old home are still here. With all here, the home on high is only suggested by the grey hairs and failing strength of the parents; with some gone, the heavenly home seems just across the street. Whether, however jubilant with the laughter of unscarred hearts or tinged with the sadness of those who have loved and lost, the family reunions are the sweetest experience the members of a severed family know.

Heaven is the saints' family reunion. David said when his little boy died, "I shall go to him but he shall not return to me." Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Many are disturbed by the fact that Jesus said to the Sadducees that in heaven they

shall neither marry nor be given in marriage. This does not mean that kindred souls shall not be dear to each other there. Blood ties only end at the grave. Heart ties are not snapped by death, for love is stronger than death. Only that which is human in our marriage relation ends with death. That which is divine survives. Husband and wife who are one in Christ and children to whom Christ is always the elder brother will be more real and more dear to each other over there than here.

But the reunion of the saints above will not be limited to the little circle that makes the family here. We belong to a bigger family than the one we live with in the flesh. "Many shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Like elder children born and out in the world before the younger children appear, the poets, the prophets, the painters and the martyrs preceded us. We never saw them in the flesh, we never heard their voices, but they will be with us in the great family reunion in the Father's house.

Time, like a doting father, has told us of his older children and we feel as though we know them, but there they shall tell us face to face the stories of their lives. Moses will tell us of the forty silent days on Sinai; Enoch will tell us how he rambled into glory; David will tell us the story of the psalms; Daniel will tell us of the night in the lions' den.

Can you imagine yourself in the great throng that will crowd the Father's house, hearing the blessed Saviour saying, "We will now hear Paul on the story of his conversion," and later, "We will now listen to Xavier on his journey to China." Can you catch the thrill that will then vibrate the hearts of the heavenly host as Boniface and Colombo and Augustine and Luther and Wycliffe and Carey and Moody and Wesley rise to speak?

We beam with a reminiscence that is mellow as the sunset when we hear the name of some celebrity we have heard. The true and the great will all be there and we shall see and hear them at their best, not at the cold distance of a concert hall but in the warm, unrestrained fellowship of home. They will not be to us members of another race, demi-gods of another era; neither shall we be to them the scions of a weak, degenerate age. The years will be miles and we shall simply have come from near and far to our Father's house.

Like every other family reunion there shall be one, however, whose personality shall be dominant. What would the gathering of all the saints amount to if He would not be there who went to prepare the place? It would be a palace without a hearth, a tree without foliage, a sky without a sun. We all want to see the loved ones with whom we walked the dusty miles; we all want to see the immortals who went before us; but far above and beyond all other cravings is the desire to see our Lord and Master.

We have seen Him in the sacred page, we have seen Him on the artist's canvas, we have seen Him in the light of faith, but we want to see Him as He is. We have often heard Him in the multitude. The services of the sanctuary are the sweetest experiences we have ever known. But we want to know Him as the family of Bethany knew Him, we want to hear Him as the group at Emaus heard Him. Free from all the restraints of mortality and time, we want to grasp the nail-pierced hand and hear the love-filled voice of our Saviour in his heavenly home.

The joy of fellowship with our Saviour will not obliterate the joy of fellowship with each other but it will subordinate it as the enjoyment of a soul-stirring sermon or chorus subordinates minor relations. We sit together in the church and in the concert hall, man with wife and parent with child, but in the raptures of the moment we are closest related to the one who is lifting our souls. So through eternity we shall be together in our Father's house, each real enough to each other, yet each entranced by his Lord.

"Friends will be there I have loved long ago;
Joy like a river around me will flow;
Yet just a smile from my Saviour, I know,
Will through the ages be glory for me."

BOLDNESS AT THE THRONE

"Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace."

Heb. 4:16.

The thrones of monarchs as well as the throne rooms in which they were kept have always been objects of greatest veneration. Why should they not? The throne of England dates back to 1297, when Edward I had it brought down from Scotland where, for many years before, the kings of Scotland sat upon it. Upon it have been crowned all the sovereigns of England from Edward II to the present king. Around it have gathered the true and the great of England for over six hundred years. It contains in its seat the famous old red sandstone said to have held the head of Jacob at Bethel when he slept and saw the angels ascending and descending between earth and heaven.

The throne of Germany, presented to one of the former monarchs of the country by a number of army officers, has clustering around it the glamour and the glare of a thousand celebrities. It is made of solid silver and forms the chief object of attraction in one of the most gorgeously furnished rooms on the face of the earth.

The throne of Solomon was made of ivory overlaid with pure gold; before it was a footstool of gold, the whole being approached by six steps, on either end of each being the statue of a lion, two such statues also standing guard at each arm of the throne.

Why shouldn't men who work all year for a few paltry coins look with wonder upon a chair that is covered with the thing they seldom ever see? Why shouldn't they grow pensive as they look at a footstool of gold when theirs is nothing but a brick or a stone?

Ah, how clearly they must see today as they look back from the realms of light how much happier they were with their feet upon a stone before the humble hearth of peace and love than the kings with their gold and their feuds. Add to the material splendor of these thrones the historical prestige that they had and to that the belief in the divine rights of kings and you will see still greater reason for the respect with which they were viewed and the reverence with which they were approached.

Being written in the days of thrones and crowns, it is not strange that the Bible should make many references to them and often express the things of God in terms of royalty. Paul speaks of "the crown of righteousness"; James speaks often of "the kingdom"; David says, "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens"; and the

author of this letter to the Hebrews says, "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace."

The ancient Incas of Peru had many royal palaces and many throne chairs. So God in the Bible is spoken of as occupying many different thrones: David said, "God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness"; in Isaiah God says, "The heaven is My throne, earth My footstool"; in Jeremiah we read, "Jerusalem is called the throne of Jehovah"; in the Psalms, "He hath prepared His throne for judgment."

We are not fit even to see God on any of these thrones until we have first approached Him boldly at the throne of grace. That is the throne nearest us, and there is where we must meet Him first if we want to meet Him with pleasure on any other.

And how shall we approach Him there? In what manner shall we come? First, as alienated rebels to plead for pardon. Such we are until we are pardoned. There isn't a sinner saved by grace who doesn't admit it. Until he is forgiven, he is full of pride, and always telling himself and sometimes others that he is as good as many who are in the Church — which is not saying much, for there are many in the Church who never were converted — only inserted. But as soon as their sins are forgiven they admit with Paul that they were vile and sinful.

"I was a wandering sheep;
I did not love the fold;
I did not love my shepherd's voice,
I would not be controlled.
I was a wayward child;
I did not love my home;
I did not love my Father's voice,
I loved afar to roam."

How sincerely does the genuinely converted man sing that hymn!

Approach the throne of grace as a suppliant for mercy, friend, if Jesus is not your personal Saviour. Ancient rebels came over crag and moor to plead for pardon from an offended monarch. Many of them were treated harshly when they came. When Henry IV of Germany, who had aroused the anger of Pope Gregory, came to Canosa to sue for pardon, the Pope made him stand barefooted in the snow, clad in sackcloth for three entire days before admitting him into his presence.

God will not humiliate you that way, but you must come and fall on your knees to be forgiven. Don't wait until it is too late to come. In the days of the Scottish chiefs, the English king, when the rebellion was crushed, gave the chiefs until the thirty-first of December to come and ask for pardon. Melan, ambitious to be the last to bow in submission to England, delayed starting south until a few days before the date. A ter-

rific snowstorm set in and made it impossible to reach the English king in time. When the day was past he arrived but only to be slain as a rebel. His day of grace was gone and no amount of explaining saved him. Don't sin away your day of grace by waiting. The longer you wait the less your pardon will be worth and the more you will suffer for your sins. How much better would it have been for the South, if they would have come back in '63 instead of '64 — how much better if they would have come back in '62? To live in rebellion against God only reduces the value of the pardon and adds to the suffering of the rebellious.

But having approached the throne of grace boldly as returning rebels, how then are we to approach it? As children. The ordinary histories of the nations show us the national characters only on dress parade. We see them only in the pompous functions of state — as they ride in the royal carriage, or receive ambassadors, or open Parliaments. But there are books that show us that the royal families are very human; that the kings are like other fathers and queens like other mothers, and that princes and princess are like other children. No king daddy can scare his laddie with his importance. He is no more important to his boy than you are to yours. He will just as readily run his dirty hands on his father's silk shirt as your boy will decorate the bib of your

overalls. He is too close to royalty to be overawed by it. He is a child of the king. The king is his father.

Approach the throne of grace, you professing Christians, with the boldness of a child. Oh, the boldness of a child with its parents! What is more charming. They expect you to be able to do anything; bind up all wounds; heal all diseases; comply with all desires; buy all creation; answer all questions; forgive all transgressions; bear all burdens. They run up into your arms with their requests as the tree runs up into the sunshine with its branches and expect you to supply them all. We can't, of course. But it flatters us to have them come and we do many things that we never thought possible before they came. They have expanded our hands as well as our hearts, lengthened our arms, strengthened our hopes and quickened our steps.

God has all the fatherly feelings that you have. He hungers for the same things from you that you crave from your children and get. How would you feel if that child of yours wouldn't ask you for anything for six months, wouldn't use the intimacy of your relation as father and child — simply sit opposite you at the table as any boarder might, occupy the same room with you occasionally as a fellow passenger might, pass you here and there with only the ordinary greetings of a friend. You would feel like an engine that had lost its train. You would miss the pull and you would

feel the loss. Approach your heavenly Father that way. He hungers for the companionship, for the child touch of His children.

We are so distant from God — like children brought up in an Orphans' Home and hardly acquainted with Him. If He isn't as close to you and as familiar as your earthly father, something is wrong with you, not with Him. "I will redeem you, with a stretched-out arm." There is your invitation. That is the way the father of the prodigal of old redeemed him. It is more than a moving hand writing a pardon that God wants to give you. He wants to give you also the outstretched arm,— the arm of a father. Have you ever felt the arm of God about you? David did. He said, "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

God wants you to be bold in asking, as bold as children are,— "Ask and it shall be given you." But you say, "That is not so: I have asked things of God that He didn't give me." Perhaps you did. When old Charlemagne was at the height of his glory, absolute monarch of practically all of south-west Europe, his son was told by his playmates that he was some day to be a great king and rule over many lands. Anxious to know how many lands he was to rule over and how great a king he was to be, he crawled up into his father's lap one day and asked him. Do you think Charlemagne told him? No, he simply shook his head. The boy had other things to learn first. "He that ruleth his spirit is better

than he that taketh a city." The boy had to learn to rule himself first before beginning to think about a kingdom. He gave him the same kind of treatment that Lincoln gave his son Robert while a Freshman at Harvard. Before the first year was more than half completed a classmate who had worked his way into the friendship of Robert Lincoln induced Robert to write to Washington to his father in behalf of his own father, who was an applicant for a Post Office. Lincoln immediately wrote back, "If you don't put your mind on your books and keep out of politics, I'll bring you home." It taught him a lesson and served him well when others tried to use him, for he simply showed them the letter and that was enough.

You see, we want to go too fast sometimes and this is when God says "No." He never refused you when you asked him for a soul. He never refused you when you asked for stronger faith, greater courage, for deeper devotion. He never refused you when you asked for anything that was good for you. You don't give your child a razor, a revolver, a hatchet, or a knife until he is fit to use them. Neither does God. He gives material things to some people. The very things you asked for and didn't get others get. There are some who can get anything from God they want. But they have asked for spiritual things long enough to assure God that they know how to handle material things. When once you reach that point when your request for material things

is absolutely unselfish, you can have anything that you want. George Muller, of Bristol, began an orphanage about sixty years ago with two shillings in his pocket. At his death his establishment contained five immense buildings, accommodating two thousand orphans whose care required one hundred and forty-four thousand dollars annually. During the sixty years he spent seven million dollars for buildings and support. Never once did he ask anyone but God for a single penny. Yet it all came in due time. The children never had to go without a meal. Often the food was not on hand until just before meal time. But when the time was fully come, the provision was fully made. The Lord sent the manna. What He did for Muller He did for Franke in Halle and for others elsewhere.

God wants you to come boldly to the throne of grace as children with requests,— He wants you to feel His arms, He wants you to see Him. You say, no man hath at any time seen God and lived. I answer in the words of Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The first statement means eye vision — the second, soul vision. Helen Keller sees more through the beauty of her soul than many a healthy beef-eater sees through his eyes; so did Fanny Crosby and John Milton and Huber and others.

But there is another way in which God wants us boldly to approach the throne of grace. He wants us also to approach the throne of grace as

guards. There comes a time when the children of the king are expected to defend the throne as well as petition it. Every king, whether magnanimous or tyrannical, has the assassin's hand within his realm and the nation's foe without, against which he must be constantly on guard. To no one should the king be able to look with more confidence than to his sons. How nobly the sons of the Kaiser rallied to their Imperial Father. Before the declaration of war was dry upon the page, the princes of the royal family of Germany were in uniform and on their way with the nation's defenders to the front, not to direct the movement of the men from a distant fort or tent but to fight with them in the ranks and bleed with them, as some of them have since had to do. They bear in their hearts the spirit of the old royalist of England who called his sons to his bedside in the closing days of Cromwell and said to them, "Sons, stand by the crown though it hang on a bush." The story of this man drawing a wall of human daring around the throne of earthly monarchs is a picture that the sons of God should hang on memory's wall and often visit. Approach the throne of grace with the boldness of a guard. Be somebody worth while even though your strength is small. Remember that you have a share in the protection of the throne of Almighty God. Stand between the warring world and God as the sons of kings are standing between their father and their father's foes; as Lilla stood between Eadwine and

Eumer of Wessex. When Eumer approached the throne of Eadwine to read a communication from Wessex, he pulled from the folds of his clothing a dagger and thrust it at the heart of the king. Lilla, his body-guard, catching the glint of the steel, rushed between the assassin and the king. His body was pierced but the king escaped with a scratch. Paul said, "I die daily." He died not only to human lusts but he died in the defence of God. The same duty is ours. The same God calls us. The same throne challenges us. Rush between the world and God, save God's name, save His honor among men, save His work.

God calls us, furthermore, to approach the throne of grace as partakers of the throne. Earthly kings are jealous of their thrones. In 1889, when Prince Rudolf of Austria was mysteriously slain, Emperor Francis Joseph, his father, wrote to the Pope, "Holy Father: Please decide whether my poor boy is to have a Christian burial or not. I ask no favor as for myself; I am resolved to abdicate." That was over a quarter of a century ago, and he is still upon his throne. Kings do not even like to think of sharing the confidences of their throne with their heirs. When the artist asked one of Germany's former Kaisers for the privilege of painting a royal scene about the silver throne of Germany, the Kaiser gave his consent upon condition that the artist would show him the sketch before proceeding with the painting. The sketch showed the Kaiser upon the

throne with the heir standing beside him having a foot upon the lowest step of the throne. The Kaiser scanned the sketch, took his pencil from his pocket and put the foot that was on the step of the throne upon the floor with the other and wrote beneath these words, "Unser Fritz, noch nicht." Not so is God. He wants to share His throne with us.

God is love and love always divides. God wants us to share with Him the glory of His throne. "He hath called you unto His kingdom and glory." He wants to share with us the councils of His throne. "Unto you is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." "The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him."

He wants us to share with him the power of his throne. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." He wants us to live like kings and be kings. Christ through his blood has made us "kings and priests unto God." Do you feel the thrill of joint sovereignty with God?

A dirty hod carrier was mixing his mud and singing, "I'm the child of a King." A cynic stopped and said, "And who's the king?" The hod carrier made no reply but continued,

"My father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands."

That man was on the throne with God. The old heaven and the old earth had passed away and

a new heaven and a new earth had appeared. Though humble as he was devout, he knew that he was "every inch a king," and he was not going to let either a mortar bed or a fool drive him out of his kingdom.

Oh, for more royalty in religion! Let us quit being servitors and begin to be kings and queens. If He made us only a little lower than the angels and crowned us with glory and honor, why should we cringe and crawl?

"Two prisoners looked out through their prison bars; One saw mud, the other saw stars."

Look up, "hitch your chariot to a star," commune with the Infinite, be a friend of God. Approach the throne of grace as one of its occupants. Why not? He has committed a whole world to your hands. If the cattle on a thousand hills are His the people on a million plains are yours,—yours to teach, yours to guide, yours to save, yours to bless. Never in all the ages did the most indulgent sovereign grant to a child one thousandth of the empire that the King of all kings has granted to you. Be true to your trust. Be as big as your task. Walk worthily of your calling.

It ill becomes kings to waste their time on trifles. When Dutch William was sailing with a hostile fleet up the Thames the English king was running pins through butterflies.

"We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have work to do and loads to lift."

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Oh, let us enlarge and glorify the kingdom. To approach the throne of grace boldly as one of its occupants and to be worthy to partake of the throne and be a friend of God we must constantly work for the Kingdom.

“ My Father worketh hitherto and I work.”

THE RESURRECTION BODY

“With what manner of body do they come?”

I Cor. 15:35.

The grave is a cave until Jesus has explained it. Paul had as much of the explanation as it is given to mortal minds to have. In Jerusalem and elsewhere he had heard of the resurrection of Christ; on the Damascus road he had met the risen Lord himself. He knew his power. To Paul the risen Lord was mightier than the Galilean. The Galilean could not budge him; the risen Lord struck him to earth. The grave had robbed him of nothing but his weariness and his pain. To Paul the grave was nothing but a wayside inn for pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.

But Paul was writing to a handful of Christians who were born and reared in a place where death was the king of terrors and the grave his bone-strewn cavern. The departed were spoken of as shades and the faith that conceived of them as shades was shadier even than those shades. Some did not even admit any existence after death. Heraclitus said, “Man is kindled and put out like a lamp in the night time.”

The flower of Grecian manhood, the nearest approach to Christ, Socrates the golden, said, at the

conclusion of his defence before the Athenian court, "The time has come for us to depart, I to die, you to live. Which of us is going to a better lot God alone knows." Absolute unbelief or uncertainty characterized the Grecian mind. Corinth was a Grecian city and the members of the Corinthian church had some of the inherited superstition of Greece in them. To remove it and to give them the truth, as well as the comfort that accompanies the truth, Paul devoted part of his first letter to them to the resurrection and the resurrected body. Never did man commit a more joyful message to posterity, save perhaps John, when he dipped his pen in the crimson fountain and wrote, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

To comfort our souls we shall take the old question of Paul and answer it in the light of revelation.

We all know that the soul will live on. It has lived on through a succession of bodies and maintained its identity. But many of us are not very clear about the resurrection of the body. Many of us are plodding along with the feelings of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, when she said:

"Those hands that toiled or held the books I read,
 Those feet that trod where'er I wished to tread,
 Those lips through which my prayers to God have
 risen,
 Those eyes that were the windows of my prison:

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From these, all these, Death's Angel bids me sever;
Dear Comrade Body, fare thee well forever!"

Others are sadly thinking of their body as seed grain from whose mould shall rise the body that is to be.

Friends, the Word does not so teach. "When He shall appear we shall be like Him." How shall He appear? Listen to the voice at the ascension: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." The resurrected body of Christ is therefore a demonstration of what our body will be like. Let us therefore spend a little time studying the resurrected body of Christ, "the first fruits of them that slept."

We are all acquainted with Him as He was when He talked to the Doctors in the temple, as He was when He sat in the boat and taught, as He put his hands on the eyes of the blind and on the ears of the deaf and the tongue of the dumb. The picture of him prostrate in Gethsemane and agonizing upon the cross and limp in the hands of his friends are all familiar to us. But of his risen body we know very little, simply because we persist in thinking of it as it was before the death on the cross.

The body that went into the tomb was a natural body. It had the hungers and appetites and organic functions of the flesh. That which came from the tomb was a spiritual body, without the

hungers and appetites and organic functions of the flesh. On the cross He cried, "I thirst." He never spoke of or acted as though He were hungry or thirsty after the resurrection. It is true He ate broiled fish with his disciples after his resurrection, but this He did not because He was hungry but to prove that He was their resurrected Lord and not a spirit. His body was so spiritualized and so purified that they took Him for a spirit. If you ask me what became of the broiled fish that He ate, if He had no more the organic functions of the flesh, if the salivary glands no more secreted, the gastric juices no more flowed and the whole digestive process had ceased, I answer, when you tell me whence came the five thousand loaves that fed the multitude, I will tell you what became of the fish that the Saviour ate. The one involved a miraculous accumulation, the other a miraculous elimination, both easy for God.

"That which is sown is natural, that which is raised is spiritual." In the process of resurrection the appetites and organic functions of the flesh are fused like the carbon thread of the electric bulb into a glow of divine light. They were not sloughed off like the skin of the serpent, for nothing was left in the tomb. All was glorified. The body that went into the tomb was bound by the laws of the material world, gravity held it down, nails made it bleed, walls and doors kept it out, the sun flushed it, the rains drenched it. But it was not so with the resurrected body.

It was as free from the limitations of the material world as the soaring eagle is free from the fences and the hills of the lowlands. When the disciples came to the tomb on the morning of the resurrection they found the grave clothes in which Christ had been wrapped lying there fold upon fold. They were not lying carefully folded as your napkins and your newly ironed bed linens but folded as they were while still around his body. Yards and yards of linen were used to enswath the Saviour's body. It encased him in bands horizontally wrapped, it went bandage-wise from shoulder to hip and from hip to shoulder, it encased His limbs, it enclosed His head. Sprinkled profusely among the folds were the spices to preserve the body, at least a hundred pounds of them. He was more completely bandaged in complicated folds than any hospital patient ever was. Yet so spiritualized was His body in the process of resurrection that He came out from that encasement of spice and linen without disturbing a single fold. The Greek Testament tells you so. The encasement lay there when the disciples came to the tomb just as it lay there when the Saviour's body was in it, with perhaps the exception of being the least bit flattened by the departure of its occupant. Had the linen been nicely folded in a pile at the head of the slab, it would have proved that Christ was not in the tomb but it would not have proved his resurrection. The disciples might have come and taken his body away and buried it elsewhere

and folded the grave clothes thus. But nothing but the power of Almighty God could withdraw that body from its burial encasement without disturbing so much as a single fold.

His freedom from the limitations of the material world is further seen in His first meeting with His disciples after the resurrection. It is the first Easter evening; the disciples are shut up in a room in Jerusalem for fear of the Jews. They knew not what moment the door would be battered in and they themselves dragged out to Calvary. When the thirst for blood takes hold of a people it is hard to say at what crime they will stop. While they are fearing and praying and hoping and quaking Jesus suddenly appears in their midst. The Bible does not say that He came miraculously through the door, but John says that the doors were shut and Luke says that they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit. Such a fright would hardly have fallen upon them if He had been ushered in through the window or some unusual opening. The inference is that they were frightened because He suddenly came through that which keeps flesh and blood out. It may be that He came through the door or through the wall. The one was as easy to pass through as the other, because it was a spiritual body that He had and not a natural body. This may seem weirdly strange and almost gruesome but it is a fact that can be scientifically demonstrated. The X ray is refined matter. It can

go through a steel plate without showing you on one side or the other where it went through and can reveal what is on the other side.

The freedom of Christ's resurrected body from the limitations of the material world is also seen in His ascension forty days after the resurrection. Standing on the mount of Olives and talking with His disciples, He quietly, gracefully and sacredly lifted up His hands in blessing upon them and slowly rose from them until a cloud received Him out of their sight. This would not have been possible to a body such as we have now, not to such a body as Christ had before His death, for his body was a natural body, gross, dense, heavy. But when it was raised a spiritual body it was as easy to travel in one direction as in another. That is true of all matter. The more you refine it the freer you make it. Here is water, a liquid; it is so heavy and so bound to earth that it moves only down hill. Refine it by heating it into steam and it will move in any direction and in one as easily as in the other. Here is wood, more dense even than water. It is so dense that it will not even move down hill but only drop toward the center of the earth. Refine it by burning it into gas and it will go as lightly toward the sky as thought. That which is refined wears no chains. It is seen in many material things that have been refined. It was seen in Christ.

But in our admiration of Christ's spiritual body, possessed of such wonderful powers, let us

remember that it was in the process of spiritualization even before death. He walked on water, which was contrary to the laws of nature, and was glorified at the transfiguration with a glory that was entirely foreign to man. While His was a natural body before death, it was so completely under the control of His noble spirit that at times it rose above the realm of the natural and anticipated the resurrection for a few brief moments. He had such a wonderful spiritual body after His resurrection because He had such a spirit filled body before it.

This leads us to the consideration of our bodies at the resurrection. With what body shall we come? We too have a promise of a resurrection. It is not promised on the third day. It may not be until after a thousand years have come and gone. Maybe the capitol at Washington will be as hazy in the memory of man as the buried cities on the plains of Shinar before we shall be called from the grave. We may be of the hard-packed clay that blankets the earth centuries upon centuries before the summons will come. But somewhere in the future lies a day when all the graves will be opened and all the vaults unlocked, when the graveyards will look like plowed fields and Westminster like a stone quarry.

With what body shall we come? "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Does that mean that the body that goes into the grave will come out of the grave spiritualized and glori-



fied? It must or it would not be a resurrection. It is true, some refer to Paul's statement of a grain of wheat falling into the ground and sending up new grains as it dies as a description of the resurrection. But it is not a description, only an illustration, the best he could find to make such a mysterious thing as the resurrection intelligible. The germination of a grain of wheat is not a resurrection, it is merely a propagation of new life. The grain that comes up is an exact duplicate of the grain that went down, neither better nor worse. The body that comes up is a thousand times better than the body that went down. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."


It is true that the blind man does not care to think of the resurrection of his sightless eyes, nor the consumptive of the resurrection of his wasting lungs, but the spiritual body will be without imperfections. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." Oh how precious those words have become to the ministers of Jesus Christ, after repeating them beside the lowered forms of so many of their brethren and sisters in Christ!

Sometime between the funeral dirge and the trumpet of the Lord the soul will rush back for its old comrade of the sod and kiss it into a divine glory. By a miracle no less wonderful than the creation of man himself God will take that which

was sown in weakness and raise it in power and it shall have the same qualities and powers that the resurrected body of Jesus had, for the word declares that when He shall appear we shall be like Him. John says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." Very significantly does he add: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

If you want to be raised a spiritual body, having the freedom from disease and natural limitations and know the buoyancy and power that Jesus had after His resurrection, you must do what He did to win it: bring the body under subjection of the spirit and begin the spiritualizing process here. You must do what John says: "Purify yourselves."

It may not be possible for you to walk upon the water as Jesus did, but it is possible for your spirit to gain the ascendancy over the body so that you can walk upon your passions and appetites without sinking, which is as great a miracle. This is an absolutely essential preliminary to a resurrection such as Jesus underwent. That only can be spiritualized which has the spiritual germ in it. Live the life of gross carnality and lust and you will come from the tomb heavy as lead; live the life of purity and love and you will come forth as your Master did, radiant as the morn, warm as the sun-



beam, buoyant as the eagle, strong in undiminishing and everlasting power.

Purify yourselves from day to day, then when He comes to claim His own He will change our poor vile bodies mouldering in the grave "that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

THE STICK AND THE AXE

"And he cut down a stick and cast it in thither and made the iron to swim."

II Kings 6:6.

Many years ago the school of the prophets became too small for the number of students. Instead of bringing the board of trustees together to devise ways and means for raising funds to enlarge the quarters, it led some of the students to do what, if done today, would give the president of such an institution a fit. They came to Elisha, the President of the Seminary, and said: "Let us go to the Jordan and take thence every man a beam and let us make there a place where we may dwell."

One of two things was true then that is not true today: either theological students were better mechanics then than they are now or they lived in simpler buildings. The latter probably was true, for while one of them was felling a beam his axe-head flew off into the water. A mechanic would likely have examined his axe before beginning to swing it. No sooner had it fallen into the water than he exclaimed: "Alas, my master! for it was borrowed." If he wasn't a good mechanic, he was an honest man. If every one were as conscientious about borrowed things we wouldn't be able

to walk down street for the borrowed umbrellas that would be flying back and forth to their original owners, and what swarms of books would there be homeward bound and what dress patterns and wheelbarrows and hatchets and saws!

The Bible enjoins us to be our brother's keeper but it has not appointed us his assignee. So if you have borrowed your neighbor's goods and have turned the loan into joint ownership, quit singing "Loving kindness, oh how free," and show some. You can't be leaning on the everlasting arm very hard while you are leaning on your neighbor's everlasting hoe.


The student thought the axe was gone forever because the water was deep. But Elisha had a double portion of Elijah's spirit and he calmly walked to a tree, cut down a stick, cast it upon the water and brought the axe up.

Does this tax your faith? If someone had told you twenty years ago that a pile of steel and aluminum and canvas weighing five hundred pounds would rise without a pulley into the sky, one mile, two miles, what would you have said? Now you read it with no more sensation than you feel when you read a train schedule. Is it harder to believe that a man of God could bring a few pounds of iron thirty or forty feet than that an aviator can lift five hundred pounds of metal and canvas two miles into the sky? Not for me. You say the one conformed to the laws of nature, the other did not. How do you know?

When the Wright brothers began their experiments wisecracks said: "It is preposterous that anything heavier than air should rise unaided into the air." They didn't know that air is as rigid as steel when struck rapidly enough. Before you say that Elisha didn't conform to the laws of nature be sure that you know them all. We are learning more every day and only the fool knows it all.

But even if he did not conform to the laws of nature, he was the ambassador of God, the maker of nature and all of nature's laws, and could therefore, with his authority, rise above those laws and do something by special provision. The kaleidoscopic changes of Europe, the most rigidly ruled of all continents, show that no laws are above special contingencies.

But the physical miracle by which the axe was brought up by a stick must not detain us. We are on the way to something better, the spiritual application of the ancient miracle. All these stories of the marvelous dealings of God in bygone ages are given for a two-fold purpose: first, for historical enlightenment; second, for instruction and help. Recreant would we be indeed if we whittled away our time analyzing the historical event. What does this event mean to us today? What help is there in it for the man who tomorrow will follow the plow, the machine, the ledger, the woman who will be bending over the sink, the tub, the ironing board, the sewing machine?



The stick is beyond all doubt a symbol and a prophecy of that other piece of wood that centuries later was cut from another tree and thrown on the turbulent river of human sorrow. In cold historic narration we are told that it was raised on Calvary and tamped in the solid earth, but in spiritual allegory it was cast upon the waters of humanity's needs to bring up the axe.

And what is the axe? The heavy things of life, the lost things, the submerged things. The axe that Elisha's stick brought to the surface symbolizes, first, *humanity's moral degeneracy*.

The European war has thrown many who were optimistic about our civilization into a pessimistic mood and many are today where Hamlet was when he said the times were out of joint and everything rotten in Denmark. But we must not let a big collision blind us to the long years of development through which humanity has come. Railroad collisions do not make us wish for the stage coach, the broken bridge does not discredit the thousands of whole ones. In spite of this suicidal war the world is ten thousand times a better place to live in than it was in the days of Cæsar, Pericles, or Pharaoh. In their days the morality of the world was a sunken axe. Kings captured wives as cowboys captured wild cattle on the western prairies, and no one raised a hand in protest except, perhaps, the husband of the stolen wife and sometimes he did not. Imagine a President of the United States picking out a wife from a Phila-

delphia audience, from a Pittsburg, a Chicago, a Denver crowd and telling his secret service men to escort her to his train. Imagine any civilized ruler doing that today. We cannot conceive of it even as a possibility. What makes it impossible to conceive as a possibility? The stick that was thrown above the sunken morality of humanity, the cross of Jesus Christ. Where the cross has not cast its shadow over society, kings still have their harems and womanhood is still debased, which of course means that the home is nothing more than a legalized brothel.

The saving influence of the cross in the marriage relation is typical of the saving influence of the cross in every relation, the parental relation, the social relation. The inner relations of personality have also been lifted and glorified by the overshadowing of the cross.

As the cross has brought up the sunken morality of the world, so it has brought up also *the sunken industrialism of the world*.

From the beginning of time the strong have shown a tendency to burden and oppress the weak. Hood, the poet, describes it in the "Song of the Shirt"; Markham describes it in "The Man with the Hoe."

Others describe it in other ways. When labor-saving machines came into existence every one expected to see the hardships of labor diminished and the condition of the laborer alleviated. Why not from labor saving devices? But they forgot

that labor saving machines only give human greed greater opportunity to oppress. The change of method did not change the heart, and so the condition remained unchanged or grew worse. The nimble little children were put behind the nimble spindles and shuttles, and girls and boys who should have been in school and some of them more properly at their mother's side were run into factories and blighted like the rose, before they had fairly begun to bloom.

It is not so today. Inch by inch the stern hands of the law are tearing child labor and heartless employer apart and sending the children into the schools and out into the sunshine where they ought to be. Many states absolutely forbid child labor until late adolescent life and others provide a limited amount of schooling for the factory child who has passed the minimum age. What great force lies back of all these progressive industrial movements? But one thing: the determination of Christian men. Men with jaw-bones and back-bones are replacing cuttle fishes and angle worms in our legislative halls and our executive chairs.

The cross of Jesus Christ, the stick of wood, has lifted the industrial world to where it is today. When Billy Sunday went to Paterson the socialistic labor leaders said to the people, "Billy Sunday will put you to sleep industrially," their contention being that the gospel that he preaches is too personal for this highly associated age of ours. But tell me, pray, how much would have

been done for this organized age of ours if men at the head of affairs had not had a strong personal religion to hold them to their convictions? If you want to know why Pennsylvania has such good child labor laws today you must go back to a modest home in central Pennsylvania where father and mother Brumbaugh taught their growing child to be personally pure, personally upright, personally devout. If you want to know why New York state is purged of her gambling at Saratoga you must go back to the parsonage in which Charles E. Hughes was taught the way of righteousness and to the old white-haired father who, when the fight was on between his son and a vice-protecting legislature, prayed that "Charles would be given grace to win the day."

Social righteousness! There is none without personal piety. The latter is the child of the former. "Simply to Thy Cross I Cling" always precedes "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The overshadowing of the cross of Jesus Christ has brought up the industrialism of the world, first, by bringing up the personal life of those in authority and second, by bringing together those who have been brought up, into a concerted action. The cross of Jesus Christ also brings up *the sunken ambitions of life*.

How youth swings the axe of ambition! It is like a breeze from the ocean to attend a graduation exercise and hear the graduates tell of all the things they are going to do and doubly refreshing

to hear how soon they are going to do them. If you were to land here on the latest train from Mars and knew nothing of this old world with its perverse and crooked generations, you might expect to see the whole thing cleaned up in a year. With a few apologies to Whittier we may well repeat,


Blessings on thee, my hopeful man,
 With barefoot faith and rosy plan;
 From my heart I wish thee joy;
 I was once a graduate boy.

Alas, alas, for the dreams of graduation night! Before a year rolls by most of them are plucked and singed and basted like a turkey ready for the oven. It is well that most of them are, for they are worth more that way than any other.

But the tragedy comes in the lives of those who lose their ideals entirely, who slump into a physical, mental and spiritual indifference, who lose the axe. What will recover it for them? Nothing but the cross of Jesus Christ. Sometimes you can brace up a derelict by a little rebuke, sometimes by a little persuasion, sometimes you can prod him by telling him of men who came back; but these things are temporary and unsatisfactory. The thing that the man of lost ideals needs is the abiding presence of him who never lost an ideal. The helping hand of a brother is the best thing the earth knows for a fallen man, but earth holds not the secret of man's redemption. Heaven revealed

that, and when it came its symbol was not a human hand but a divine cross. Ananias, who laid his hand on Paul in the dark room of Damascus, who taught him and baptized him, was a true benefactor to Paul and the hand that gave him his sight was worthy of any pilgrim's kiss, but when Paul came out to tell the story of his conversion he gloried in the cross of Christ and not in the hand of Ananias. It is always so. The men who wallowed in sin and threw their health and friends and homes and peace away like worthless rags, to ply their sinful orgies and who now rise up in tent and tabernacle, chapel and mission to tell their stories all point to the cross of Jesus Christ as the means of their salvation. The cross also raises *the burden of years*.

When life is young and the heart is gay we wear our years as the bird wears the feathers on its wings. There is no burden when you are "knee-deep in June." Everything is redolent, buoyant and happy. But when the eternal snows begin to drive the crows from your head and speech becomes halting and memory begins to leak like an old boiler and the hands that used to sweep in Spencerian grandeur leave marks on the paper like the marks of birds' feet in mud and the eye that sparkled like a mountain lake grows hazy as a dusty window and the ears that heard the slightest whisper miss the words that were sent directly to them and the feet slip loosely in the slippers, there steals into the heart an uncomfortable feel-



ing of loneliness and sometimes intrusion. The old zest is gone, the axe is fallen, the pitcher is broken, the spokes rattle, the roof leaks, the tree is leafless and limbless. What a picture of desolation without Christ! What a picture of peace where Christ abides! The difference between a Christless age and a Christ filled age is the difference between red and grey.

Years ago we saw an artist sketch a cabin in a field of snow. The roof, the window ledge, the tree close by were covered with all the snow they would hold.

“ The bridle post an old man sat,
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat.
No cloud above, no earth below,—
A universe of sky and snow.”

To look at it made one shiver. With one quick sweep of the crayon the artist put a few lines of red on the window and in the sky. The miracle was done. The red on the window told you of a hearth fire within and the red overhead of a sun in the sky. Age, with Christ in the heart, is a big arm-chair before the fire. The cross takes all the burden away; it lifts the axe and gladdens the heart. When Jesus abides with us toward evening everything becomes sweeter as the years go by. “ To live is Christ, to die is gain.”

The cross also lifts *the heart of man from the billows of death.*

Never is the heart heavier than when a loved one

is taken by death. In my mother's diary I read the entry: "When Paul died it seemed as though my heart was torn from my bosom." That was thirty years ago. She has since gone to be with Paul and with Harry, who went before him. There are other mothers, however, who are still lingering. Only God knows how many journeys they have made to the little house beneath the sod. The old love has never waned. They still talk with them, croon over them, love them. Oh, how they love them in memory's mellow light! But the heart is not as heavy as it used to be. There is less weight in the shoes, there are fewer tears in the eyes. The sweetness of resignation has filled the soul with a peace that passeth knowledge. The eyes that were once so dim shine like the windows of a mountain inn at sunset. The axe is lifted. What brought it up? The cross on which the conqueror of death and the grave died.

When David's little boy died, he lay on the floor like one dead and mourned for thirty days. He knew not the open tomb of the garden.

I saw an aged minister stand beside his son's casket and sing, with the congregation, "Nearer My God to Thee." None sang more devoutly or more firmly than he. He had passed from death unto life. Like his master, he was "no more in the world."

"Alas for him who never sees

The stars shine through his cypress trees!

Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,

Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!"

O glorious cross that points to the highest
heaven and the farthest grave! If somewhere in
the future it shall please God to carry to the sky
some symbol of earth, as legend tells us the Holy
Grail was taken, let it be Thy precious self, on
which the guilt of the world was nailed, from
which the love of heaven was given, by which the
gates of death were opened!

" In the cross of Christ I glory,
 Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
 Gathers round its head sublime.

" Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
 By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
 Joys that through all time abide."

BETWEEN TWO GRAVES

"He being dead yet speaketh."

Heb. 11:4.

(This sermon was delivered in the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, where Lincoln delivered his immortal address and where over three thousand Union soldiers, over nine hundred of them unknown, lie buried. The occasion was the reburial of a few fragments of a Union soldier, dug up at the foot of East Cemetery hill. A little group of grey haired veterans and a few respectful citizens gathered about a little box no larger than a good sized book, resting in a grave about a foot in depth, and thus in reverent appreciation showed their gratitude for "what they did here.")

It is given to all men to speak to posterity but it is seldom given to man to come back from the grave to do it. Jesus and Lazarus did it in words of living breath. This hero does it in the fragments of his own mortality. Like the Quidalquivir of Spain, which flows under the surface and appears occasionally to the sight of man, this noble warrior comes to light between two graves to tell us of the courage that makes men free.

The fragments that remain are pathetic indeed. What once was flesh and blood and life and fire is now nothing but arm bone, belt buckle and bullet. The lips that kissed a mother's lips good-bye and cheered a comrade's failing heart; the head that dreamed the dream of happy days at home and happier days to come; the hands that bore the gun and stanchd a brother's wounds; the feet that tramped the weary miles while thousands slept in

peace; the eye that flashed in carnage and softened in pity; the teeth that clicked while the bullets snicked, are all gone back to their native element to await in indistinguishable dust the trumpet of the Lord. These few fragments will rest untouched among the immortals; the rest will be ploughed and shoveled and harrowed and sown until the earth shall be dissolved and the heavens rolled together as a scroll.

But how eloquent are these fragments that remain! The arm helped to bear the heaviest burden that the nation has ever known. In the scorching heat of summer's hottest days it yielded its every fibre for the nation's defence. It was one of the pillars of fire that led four million slaves to freedom's fairest Canaan; one of the peninsulas of valor that pushed out from the love of a courageous heart into the froth and ferment of hate's stormiest sea.

The worms have had their fill; only the marrowless bone remains; but from its shallow grave it speaks as eloquently to us today as Lincoln spoke to that larger host up yonder many years ago.

How eloquent is the belt buckle that goes with these sacred remains into the second grave. By it we know as well as a government record could tell us that this man was not his own. He bears on his body, fifty-two years after he fell, the marks of a glorious loyalty. Next to the marks of the Lord there are no decorations of honor com-

parable to a free nation's emblems upon her daring heroes. More beautiful than the Victoria cross or the Golden Fleece, more precious than the tiaras of queens, more holy than the square and the compass or even the crescent is the belt plate of a Civil War soldier. Prize them, ye who touch them with the trembling hand of age today. The vigor that snapped them into place in the hurried days of old is gone, but their worth is not perishing with your strength. As the crackling logs upon the hearth carry us back to the forest primeval and show us the cabins and the clearings of our revolutionary sires, so your straps and buckles will carry us back to the days made glorious by your deeds. They will burn on the hearth of grateful memory long after you are gone and our hearts will burn within us as we stand before them.

But the most eloquent of these historic fragments of mortality is the little ball of lead which was found among them. The other fragments tell of devotion and valor. This one speaks of a sacrifice unto death. The others recall Thermopylæ, Hastings and Tours. This one reminds us of Calvary. As the nails of the cross hushed the reverent of old, so this missile of death humbles us today. In low but audible tones it whispers from its shallow tomb, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." And as that whisper enters our hearts, let us, the heirs of bygone suffering, in the presence of these sacred relics and these few veterans who will soon be gathered to their com-

rades, resolve to make our lives more worthy of such sacrifice and more ready to repeat it in whatsoever way our heavenly Father asks.

To live for the good of man and die exhausted in the service, whether on the field of battle or in the arms of friends, is to speak to posterity a message that will warm the hearts of generations unborn as the tropic waters of the Gulf warm the Arctic coast lines of Scandinavia. Let us learn from this little handful of dust the lesson of manhood's highest mission and go back to our homes with bigger hearts and higher purposes, resolved to give posterity the opportunity of rising up to call us blessed as we rise up to call the noble dead blessed today.

FINISHING THE UNFINISHED

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass."

Psalm 37: 5.

In the home of Dickens travellers are shown the unfinished manuscript on "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," exactly as the great author left it. So are travellers shown the unfinished paintings of Angelo, Stuart and others. They are not pathetic, because they stand amid a great array of finished masterpieces. What need we care about unfinished Edwin Drood when we have David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, Dombey and Son and all the others? The unfinished work at the end of a rich life is what is to be expected, for the joy of labor will keep a man at work until his hand drops and his eye closes.

The thing that hurts is not the unfinished work but the unfinished life.

There are the two parents of a fair young boy, with nurse and doctor beside the bed. How anxiously they watch the doctor's movements, how eagerly they question the nurse. Money without restriction is at their command and the doctors know that anything that science has discovered is at their beck and call. They do their best, but

when their best is done the boy is dead and they lay his dear form away in a handsome casket for the resurrection day. *Unfinished.*

There goes a ruddy young graduate of Yale to southern New York, not to barter or buy but to suffer and die. Standing in the clear crisp air of a September morn he looks bravely at his captors and the clear sky beyond, as though talking to the unborn centuries, and says, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." He was but twenty-one years of age, forty-nine short of the allotted three score years and ten. *Unfinished.*

There goes another son of Yale who dies eight years before Nathan Hale is born. He loses his father at nine, his mother at fourteen, and goes to a consumptive's grave at twenty-nine. Carey in the providence of God spent forty years in India, Moffat fifty-three in Africa, Patton fifty in the New Hebrides and Zeisberger sixty among the Indians. David Brainard was given but four short years among the Indians of America and then shunted off by consumption. *Unfinished.*

There lies a little girl sick with a fever, her doll in her hand beside her, her mother looking tenderly at both, and praying to the dear Lord that her little doll mother may be spared and that her own future may be brightened with the sunshine of her eyes and the pressure of her arms. But it is not so to be. Like many and many another little fairy of a modest little home she goes out in the

light of an evening star and leaves the home in darkness and in tears. *Unfinished.*

Over yonder, beyond the shriek and roar of shrapnel and cannon, away back in the early Christian era, lives a monk in a cell made by nature's own hand in the side of a mountain. He has not gone there to speak to the ages but to live a life of rigorous self-denial and undisturbed communion with the Infinite. His days and his nights are as unvaried as the return of the sunshine and the stars. Day after day, night after night, in his coarse garb, he repeats his prayers and chants his songs, now bending his deep-focused eyes upon his secret parchment, now closing it and brooding on its thoughts. Buried to the world before he died, exacting nothing, contributing nothing, as non-productive to his day and generation as the little girl who died with her doll in her arm; sent into the world with hands to work, tongue to speak, feet to run, eyes to cheer; none of it done. *Unfinished.*

Thus from every nook and corner of this world comes the cry "unfinished!" "unfinished!" as "unclean!" "unclean!" came from the lepers of old. Sad indeed would this world be if there were no remedy for the unclean and no satisfaction for the unfinished. But He who knoweth our frames and remembereth that while we are dust we are also only a little lower than the angels has made abundant provision for both. The unclean were made as pure as the new-born babe, the unfinished

are made as complete as a cathedral a thousand years in building.

The little boy who died in the home of wealth just before his young manhood came in sight was Leland Stanford. His life was not only unfinished but hardly begun. Death cut the thread almost as soon as the spool began to unwind. But love is stronger than death and what death left unfinished love completed. Thenceforth the parents, who with all their wealth couldn't keep their boy, dedicated their wealth to the memory of their boy and erected Leland Stanford University at a cost of forty million dollars. Death robbed him of about twenty thousand days. His parents laid down about two thousand dollars for every one of those days and dedicated them to the education of the youth of the western states. Thus, though dying in his boyhood, Leland Stanford is going about from home to home, from village to village, from city to city, as his Master did, calling men everywhere to better living. *God is finishing the unfinished.*

The ruddy young graduate of Yale who gives up his life for his country at twenty-one on that cool September morn rises from an obscure patriot to one of the country's immortals, becoming mightier dead than alive. On the spot on which he died stands the heroic figure of Nathan Hale, daily reminding the passing thousands that "the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed

in us." The college that sent him out honors his memory; the schools of the land teach every generation the story of his life and the valor of his heart. When his eyes looked the last time out over his beloved land his work was unfinished. But *God is finishing the unfinished.*

That other son of Yale, who slept in the woods beside his horse, when he had one, and often walked ten and twenty miles to preach to the Indians and died a consumptive at twenty-nine in the home of Jonathan Edwards, left a story that has grown sweeter with the passing years. Though leaving nothing but a heavy grey overcoat, in which he often slept in the woods, a compass and a few manuscripts as a material legacy, David Brainard left a life of devotion that has been the inspiration of thousands.

Carey was influenced by his story. Carey spent forty years in India and was instrumental in having the Bible translated into forty different dialects and distributed among three hundred million people. Two hundred and twelve millions of Bibles were distributed during his forty years in India. From Carey, Marsden and Martyn and hundreds of others caught the fire and there are innumerable thousands today who are "attempting great things for God and expecting great things from God" because Brainard lived. Did he live in vain? *God is finishing the unfinished.*

That little girl with the doll in her arm, going to her grave when the rose was in the bud, lived

long enough to make an indelible impression upon the heart of a school companion. Trapping him in school, she loiters after school to tell him she is sorry that she spelled the word. Forty years pass by; the boy has grown to manhood, and as he goes slowly down the western slope of life's long hill he recalls that little girl and says reminiscently to himself:

"Still memory to a grey-haired man
That sweet child face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

"He lives to learn in life's hard school;
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss
Like her,—because they love him."

Is that little girl, who died in Whittier's boyhood, dead? She lives, she speaks, she blesses, she ennobles thousands upon thousands today, a century after she passed on. Unfinished when she fell asleep,—*The Lord is finishing the unfinished today.*

That monk who lived and died in his lonely cell like a wild bird of the wilderness, never coming out into the world and never bearing any of the world's burdens, lived long enough to write a song of praise to God. It was in Latin and was written only for his own devotion. After singing it a few times, the notes dying among the rocks that gave it birth, he died. A few years ago, after a

lapse of over a thousand years, that manuscript was found and translated into English and is now one of the beautiful songs of our English hymnology. After a millennium *God finished the unfinished.*

But you say, not every one is as fortunate as these people were. If that little New England girl had gone to another school and been the playmate of another boy than Whittier she would not have been immortalized. If David Brainard had died in an Indian wigwam instead of the home of Jonathan Edwards, his story would not have encircled the globe. If Nathan Hale had not had the eager pens of brilliant New England authors to tell his story and sing his praises, his star, too, might have grown dim with the years.

You ask about the soldiers who have been forgotten, the thousands who lie four deep in trenches, the brave who have gone to the bottom of the sea. How about the thousands upon thousands of little girls as sweet of soul as Whittier's friend? Will their work be finished too? As surely as the work of any. Let us not confuse post-mortem fame with post-mortem usefulness. You can be a great benefactor though your grave be forgotten within a decade after you are gone.

Who gave the world the first mariner's compass, who built the first blacksmith's forge, who first thought of the arch and the chimney, who first turned the earth with a plough, whose mind first thought of the weaver's shuttle, who laid the first

keel of a ship, who made the first hinge, who first melted iron? The works of Edison and Field and Bell and Marconi and Stephenson rest on the works of these men as the bridge rests on its piers and the house on its foundation. Take their work out of the world and we would all go back to the caves. Their lives were very incomplete and their tools very crude but God finished the unfinished.

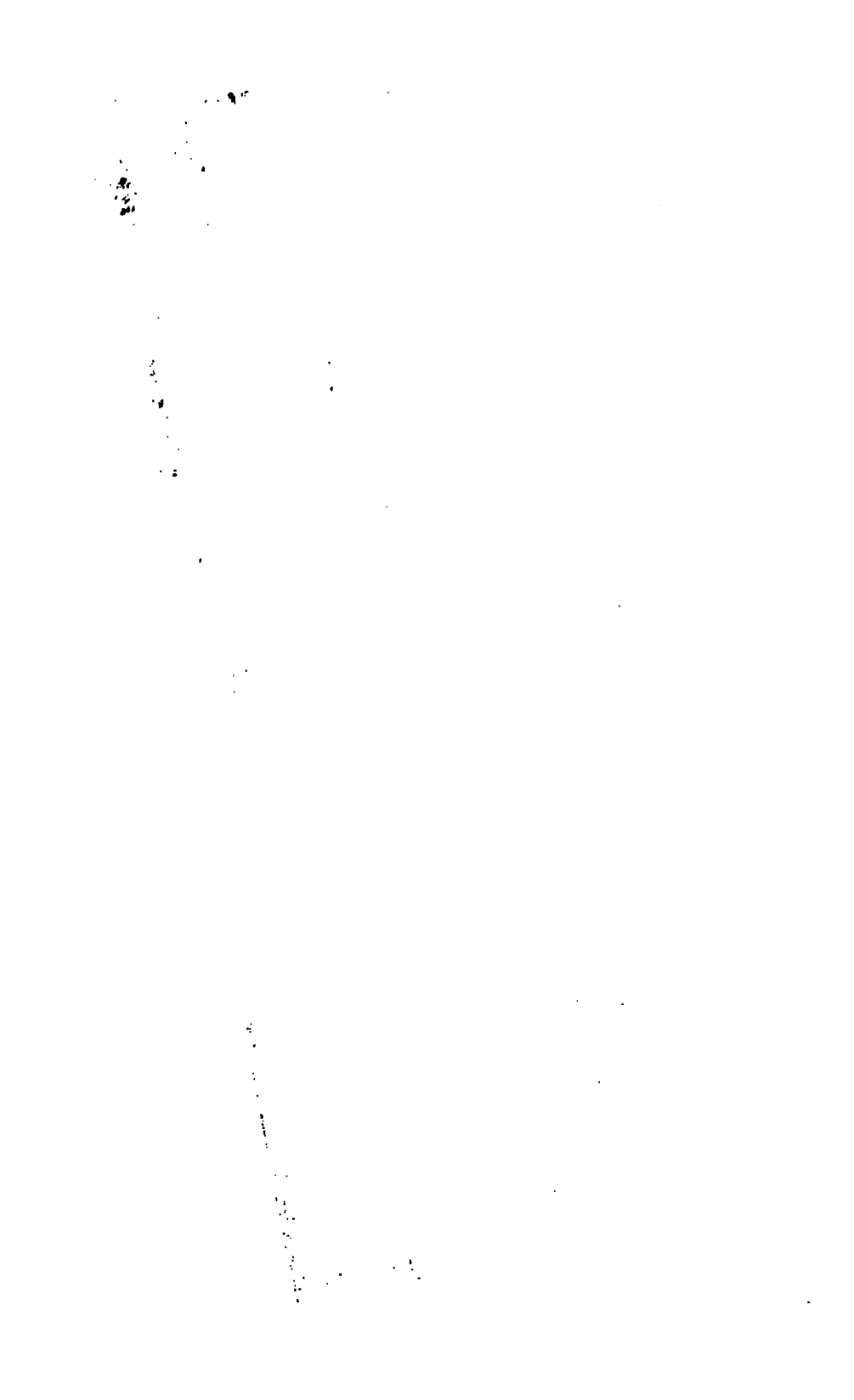
So will every worthy life be finished. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." Whether we pass away as little children with the dimples of babyhood still on our face or as parent with a helpless little brood weeping around our bed, God will finish the unfinished. If our work is honest and our heart is true our life will grow richer as the years go by. When Milton lived he could only get one hundred dollars for his immortal "Paradise Lost." In our own day his signature alone was sold for over sixteen thousand dollars. The little scraps of your influence, passed out with a loving heart to your children and your friends, will be passed on by them to others and from them to others until they become as sweet as the oracles of God. Oh let our lives be such that the Lord can finish them into something beautiful. There is one thing that the Lord cannot do, and that is to build a palace on a half-finished barn. He completes what was begun after the fashion of the beginning.

For years after Absalom died, the Jews, in passing, threw stones on the spot where he lost his life.

A great pyramid of stones soon commemorated his unfilial rascality. They stoned the place of his death because he stoned the heart of his father. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

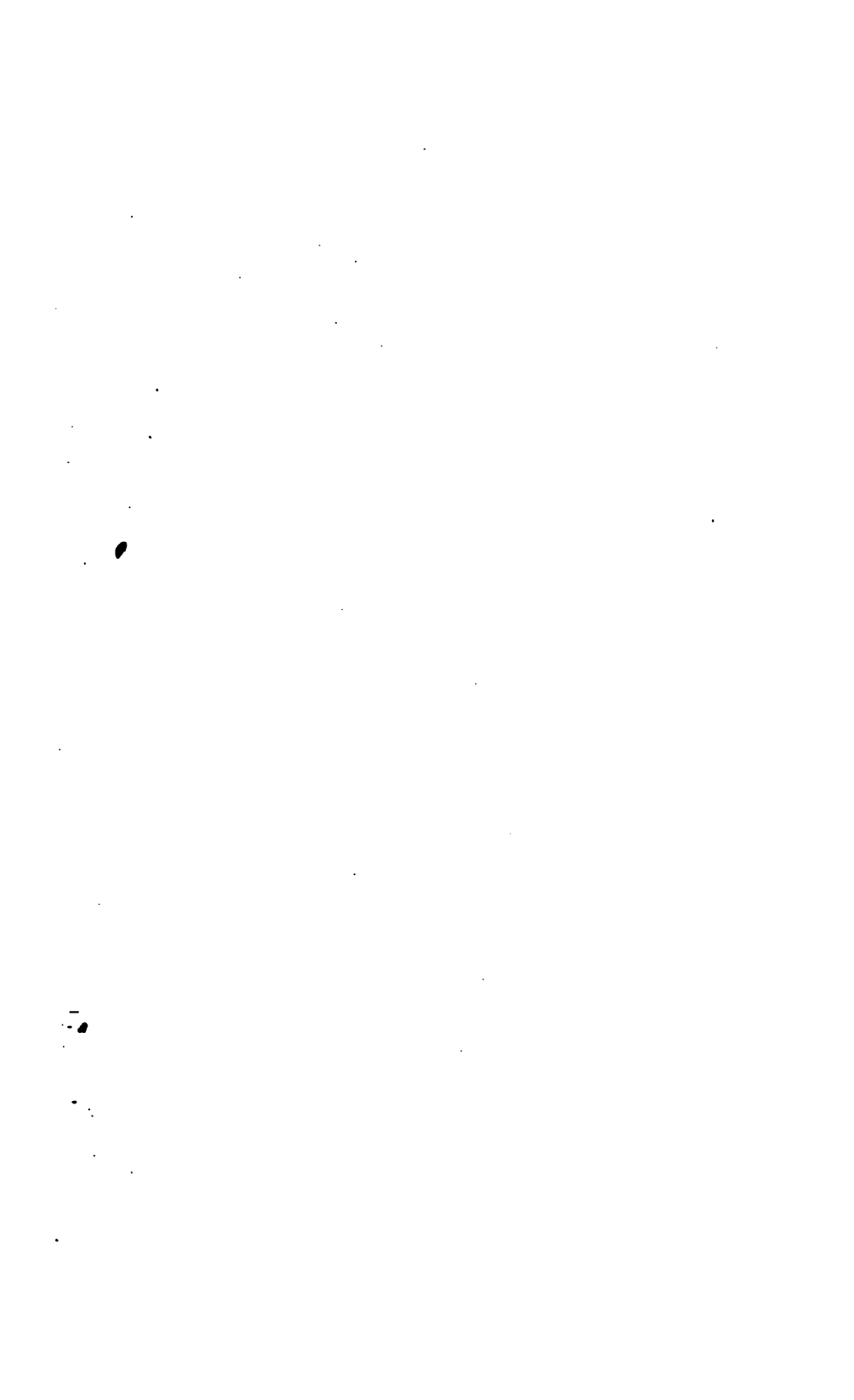
For two thousand years the reverent of earth have been going to the grave in the garden where the Saviour of men was once interred, and bowing in holy reverence there. They bow their heads and their hearts there because He bowed His will to His heavenly Father and did always those things which pleased Him.

So is it ever. God is no respecter of persons. He who does the will of God will, like the setting sun, leave behind him a trail of light and a field of stars that will gladden and guide unnumbered pilgrims. And to live in those we leave behind is not to die.









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